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World Cup kick back allegations

INTERNATIONAL soccer chiefs have taken personal gifts totalling thousands of dollars from Asian countries seeking to influence their votes to stage the next World Cup, a report has claimed.

Some of the most senior members of FIFA, world soccer's governing body, revealed for the first time how they had received gifts from Japanese and South Korean officials involved in "aggressive lobbying" for the 2002 World Cup finals, the Sunday Times said over the weekend.

Among those receiving gifts - in some cases worth nearly Stg2000 (\$A5,100) - was David Will, a vice-president of FIFA who represents Britain on its governing body.

Representatives from Latin America and Africa on the FIFA executive said they too had

"It was an attempt to influence us ... it was small beer compared with the Olympic Committee but it was a clear attempt"

received gifts

Will said he received a laptop computer worth Stg1000 (\$A2,560) and a video camera worth Stg700 (\$A1,800) from the Japanese.

"It was an attempt to influence us. It was small beer compared with the International Olympic Committee but it was a clear attempt to influence and for this reason we said, 'no more,'" he said.

Will admitted to keeping a video camera although he said he would be happy to return it.

The controversy will increase pressure on FIFA to ensure a clean decision for the 2006 World Cup host, due to be made next March.

STADIUM SHOCKER

A SPECIAL LOOK AT STADIUM AUSTRALIA BY Bruce Campbell

SOCcer FANS waiting for the World XI match in June with anticipation may be in for a rude shock - unless Stadium Australia gets it act together.

Last Saturday night I took in a concert at the new venue and was shocked to find:

* no advance information on parking or access at Ticketeck outlets

* no signposting en route from the south except for general Homebush Bay signs

* a one hour queue to access a car park ticket

* a one kilometre loop road which took a stream of cars PAST the car park just to get a ticket

* a forty minute walk from car park to stadium

* a \$25 car park fee which must make Homebush the most expensive piece of real estate in Australia

Despite the fact that signs outside of Car Park 5 declared shuttle service busses the disembarked passengers were forced to walk to Stadium Australia.

Officials I spoke to were obviously embarrassed.

When asked why there were no general information signposts I was told: "We don't know."

"There have been hundreds of complaints but there doesn't seem to be any answers."

Inside the Stadium, where the Bee Gees played to a 65,000 capacity concert-style audience there were other shocks at the venue boasted to be State of the Art.

Massive queues, mountains of garbage and prices which would make a New York cafe proprietor blush greeted patrons on arrival.

Even the much heralded food service was not up to scratch and a technical breakdown saw only the most meagre fare on offer.

Bottom of the bill was a muffin at a staggering \$2.50.

And the return trip back to the badly under signposted car park was

a repeat.

I walked past dozens of elderly and infirm patrons, even a man on crutches who was clearly in physical discomfort in the heat of a hot Sydney evening.



The coke machine at the entrance to the car park was the final insult - \$2.50 to drain the last bit of cash out of totally ripped off patrons.

All up I estimated that a night at the big soccer game will cost the average family of four something like \$250 - without having even bought tickets.

And after examining the seating on offer about 35,000 seats are not under cover while at least 20,000 would offer unacceptable viewing conditions for a major football match.

My advice; either get the train and somehow sneak your own food past the army of 'attendants' or do what I will be doing - watch it on the TV.

By the way, the Bee Gees were magnificent!



Mark Bosnich: likely to keep goal for Australia against the World XI

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Bozza sweats blood and gives up booze to get on world stage

By David Rosenthal

Australian international Mark Bosnich says he's in no rush to leave Aston Villa, but he's ambitious to play first class soccer on the world stage and he's keeping his options open.

"I have to be realistic and say that Australia are not going to win the World Cup in my lifetime, so for me to achieve that I need to be playing in the next best thing - the Champions League and the World Club championship when it comes into being," he said.

"In an ideal world I would stay at Villa."

"One thing I will never forget is that Villa gave me my chance in the Premier League."

"I would be lying though if I didn't say one of my great ambitions was to eventually play abroad, but it depends on the club and on the situation."

"I want to prove myself as a world-class goalkeeper. To do that I need to perform on a world stage."

Bosnich's Villa contract expires in summer, and from mid-May he can officially talk to anyone in the Premiership.

"I have had inquiries through third parties," he told the Sunday Express.

"But I've said the same thing to all these people."

"I do not want to get involved in any type of discussions until the season's over."

"Whatever offers come from other teams I will go back to Villa last and tell them what has been offered, in terms of money, facilities, what competitions they are in and whether I am going to be happy there."

"Then I will ask them: 'What can you come back with?'"

Bosnich's situation has been complicated by a serious shoulder injury



which did not help Villa sustain its early-season promise as league contenders.

During his absence until three weeks ago, Bosnich heard whispers he had used the lay-off to feather his nest.

"I sweated blood to come back," he insists.

His single-mindedness to regain fitness is perhaps illustrated by a change in lifestyle - alcohol is gone and the only thing he allows himself is an occasional ci-

gar. It's my only vice now," says the Aussie mega star.

"Just a couple a day.

"It might not sound very Australian but I don't touch a drop of alcohol during the season now."

Leederville Park ready for Glory

by Richard Kreider
in Perth

PERTH Glory will know by the end of next month whether or not Leederville Oval will be their home next season following an emotional meeting with the Town of Vincent Councillors last Monday night.

The ground is presently being used for training purposes by Australian Rules clubs West Coast Eagles of the AFL and Subiaco Football Club from the local WAFL competition.

With the WA Football Commission's (WAFC) proposal to extend their current leasing agreement deemed unsatisfactory, the door has now been left wide open for Glory to begin discussions with the Town of Vincent Councillors next month.

The debate, which brought one council member to tears, eventually went five votes to

two in favour of a recommendation by chief executive officer John Giorgi that they enter discussions with the Western Australian NSL club to take a five year lease.

The current lease, which is owned by the WAFC, expires on April 30 - the same time Glory's three season agreement at Perth Oval ends.

"For WA soccer, this is a huge step forward, it is almost immeasurable" said a delighted Glory chairman Nick Tana after the meeting.

WAFC director Jeff Ovens is understandably disappointed with the decision.

"We've had the venue for a very long period of time and now someone has come along and bought it from under us" he said.

"It is a bit of a body blow, but that's life" said Ovens.

The Glory are now committed to spending almost \$3 million to changing into Leederville Oval into a soccer venue.

The now infamous Hill fans have not been forgotten either.

A terraced area behind the intended northern goal will be constructed in an effort to reproduce the same atmosphere that is one of the leading attractions at the East Perth ground.

The clubs training pitch will be utilised for parking during match days.

Currently, there has been nothing concrete decided on lighting at the new venue, although Tana has said this and other areas of concern like traffic noise and large volume parking will be discussed behind closed doors at the ensuing meetings.

It was decided to recommend changing the venue name to Leederville Park, instead of an

earlier suggestion that it be called Glorybowl.

Glory spent almost \$1 million in upgrading and maintaining Perth Oval over the three seasons they were there.

The figure also includes rental charges to the ground owners, the East Perth Football Club.

"We have not diverted from moving to a multi-purpose stadium, which the WA Government has promised to be available in around three years time," said Glory General Manager Roger Lefort.



Inside Soccer's front page story of February 9 highlight Perth's plight for a new venue

Krncevic: Kings coaching target

THE Auckland new guys, the Football Kings, are closer to becoming a soccer-playing reality as interviews with potential coaches have already started.

"We have drawn up a shortlist of five, from New Zealand and overseas, and a selection panel is working through that," Kings spokesman Chris Turner said.

The Kings plan a launch early next month, at which time the coach may be named.

Turner said it was planned to hold a function involving representatives from Soccer Australia and New Zealand Soccer in the first week of April at which the club's financial backers, sponsors and details of their home ground will be announced.

The Kings, a limited liability company, will be the first club invited into Australia's Ericsson Cup competition under the new licensing agreement and will be the first to pay a licence fee.

"That will guarantee us a place in the league for

five years," Turner said.

Asked when the first payment would be paid, Turner said: "When it's due we will pay."

"So far we are the only club with a licence although I understand Carlton will need to apply for one following their change of ownership."

Turner and John Batty - the club's only directors following the pre-Christmas resignation of Noel Barkley for personal reasons and, more recently, Noel Robinson following his election to the new New Zealand Soccer board, will meet representatives from the naming rights sponsor and financial backers this week.

Turner said a number of player inside and outside New Zealand had been contacted.

"But until the coaching staff is named we are not in a position to make any commitment."

"We are allowed to sign five overseas players in our first year and we intend to do that."

Carlton coach Eddie



Eddie Krnceanic: said to be an Kings coaching target along with Wynton Rufer

Krnceanic is believed to be a leading contender to take charge of the Ericsson Cup newcomer.

Kings spokesman Chris Turner refused to speculate on any of the candidates but told *Inside Soccer* that there had been 16 applicants from within New Zealand and

overseas.

"We've also had a lot of interest from overseas players who want to be part of the Kings, there are probably about eight or nine of them from Australia," Turner said.

Soccer sources say Krnceanic and Carlton

development coach Jeff Olver are high on the list of possibilities for the Kings job.

Turner said only that the board would be putting together a coaching package a fortnight after Easter.

Krnceanic led Carlton to a grand final in its first

season in the Ericsson Cup last season, but the side has struggled lately and is in danger of missing out on the play-offs unless there's a drastic change in form.

Olver is a former Australian goalkeeper while Krnceanic is also being linked with the Socceroos job.

Krnceanic denied any contact with the Kings but said he was flattered to be linked with the new side.

"I don't know anything about it but it's nice to be wanted," Krnceanic said.

The Kings have met the criteria put forward by Soccer Australia for inclusion in the league and now need to pay a licensing fee of \$500,000 to join the league.

Turner said research had shown that the Auckland-based Kings would draw bigger than average Ericsson Cup crowds to the 24,000 capacity North Harbour Stadium.

"We are looking forward to meeting the challenge set by Northern Spirit and Perth Glory and surpassing what they

Revving them up at Bob Jane

SOUTH Melbourne captain Paul Trimboli took delivery of a new automatic BMW 328i last week complete with all the luxuries courtesy of South Melbourne corporate sponsor Melbourne BMW.

Breakers bid danger

THE Sydney-based consortium which has been locked in takeover talks with a bizarre 'secret group' for the last six months with the Newcastle Breakers was in danger of being told that their time was up as *Inside Soccer* went to press.

Chairman Bill Collins confirmed to the *Sydney Morning Herald* last week that the club had another interested bidder.

The club is now looking at that as an alternative option while also considering whether to sell the stadium and rebuild the team should neither option materialise.

Any new owner of the club would first have to lodge \$500,000 with Soccer Australia as a franchise fee and as guarantee of financial viability in the NSL.

Sharks appoint administrator

A VOLUNTARY administrator has been appointed to manage the restructuring of the cash-strapped Hellenic Athletic Soccer Club of South Australia, which owns the Adelaide Sharks national soccer league team.

Adelaide chartered accountant Bruce Mulvaney was appointed with Supreme Court approval late last Thursday yesterday following an application by a member of the club.

Mulvaney went to Thebarton Oval training to talk with players and club officials about his role in the club's business affairs.

"From this point on the club and the players will have some

certainty for the future," Mulvaney said in a statement.

"As past debts are now frozen, members are now free to rally behind the club with any benefits being directed to sporting activities."

Mulvaney said he was confident the restructuring process would be successful in a short time. The club's debts were not insurmountable, he said. The necessary funding for the Sharks' match against in Wollongong last weekend had also been guaranteed.

Already this season Sydney United have appointed an administrator as the increasing budget required to operate successfully in the NSL have hit some clubs hard.

Gippsland Falcons are hovering close to the brink of financial oblivion with another six or so clubs said to be in a similar predicament.

The recently released Soccer 21 document from Soccer Australia requires clubs in the Year 2000 to have a budget of \$5million rising to \$10million a few years afterwards.

Soccer Australia intends to re-launch a new structure for the national league by 2000 and there are certain to be a lot of new look clubs in operation by that time.

Meanwhile in Adelaide talks of a rival consortium and a News Limited backed consortium entering the national league continue.

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Bruce Campbell

IT'S ONLY AN OPINION

BEING PROACTIVE instead of reactive; that is one of the differences between professionalism and amateurism.

Sometimes it can happen without even spending a cent but, at least in soccer, more often than not it means expanding an already stretched budget thus strengthening the link of professionalism to that of being paid.

Two things have sprung up in recent weeks which hint that our game is not anywhere near professional enough.

Firstly, there is the talk about Australian Rules expanding into the Campbelltown area of western Sydney via the North Melbourne club.

With the projected demise of Western Suburbs Rugby League club the AFL is targeting one of the fastest growing demographic areas in Australia.

They have spotted a potential gold mine of future growth and seem intent on filling the vacuum which will be created when League pulls out.

A parallel is the emergence of Northern Spirit in the area vacated by North Sydney Rugby League club.

The difference, unfortunately, is that Northern Spirit happened more by chance than design.

In that I mean that it was a group of individuals who looked at an opportunity and exploited it rather than the power brokers at Paddington.

I have no doubt that Soccer Australia doesn't have the capabilities in terms of either financial or human resources to be able to plan ahead to that extent.

But until that happens then we shall always be reactive.

Why can't a ten year, or even five year, plan be drawn up and franchise holders invited from certain demographic areas?

I, personally, am fed up hearing about another Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide syndicate which wants to come into the league.

Let's get our act together and get the promotion and relegation issue up and running to sort that one out.

Then let our game's administrators be proactive by identifying areas of future expansion and building on that.

In short, let us develop our centres of influence rather than developing a cluster of clubs all scrapping for the same diminishing sponsorship dollar.

The Soccer '21 document recently released by Soccer Australia makes bland issue statements such as; "a restructured National league which includes strategically located clubs" and "development of a five year national business plan for the conduct of the League, based on commercial viability" - but it does not expand on that.

Where will those clubs be, what is the operating budget required, when will promotion and relegation be introduced, how will it operate, when will a flow-through system be implemented so that all clubs in Australia can aspire to National league status and so on?

It is too vague, it says all the right buzz words but in the end says little.

It could be a good starting point but it is not a working document.

In short, it is a reaction to the critical demands of the Australian public but falls short of being proactive.

Elsewhere in this issue you will read of the Macarthur Rams.

They are situated in that Campbelltown area and have everything in place to suggest they are a club of the future.

Maybe they do not want to aspire to NSL status but surely the guardians of the game owe it to the supporters of soccer to ensure that a club from such a growth area is in their planning.

The second issue concerns the demise of soccer coverage in the mainstream press.

Some, probably the majority, would say it is because the bigger codes have taken their rightful place now that their seasons have re-started.

Probably more in the line of truth is that the publicity machines of those codes are now in full swing once again and supplying what is basically a very lazy media with more than enough material.

When a press organisation is bombarded with material from one particular source it is too easy for that to take dominance in page design and copy space.

Now and again I deviate from personal opinion to fact.

This is one case because I know that our NSL clubs do not supply enough material.

Any media publisher will respond to being inundated with material, particularly when that material is quality.

The obvious inference is that both League and Rules have better club-driven publicity machines.

It is also fact.

The Sydney Swans alone have more personnel in their media and marketing section than Soccer Australia and every NSW NSL club combined.

That is why they grab more than their fair share of media spotlight.

It isn't a criticism of our clubs, just a statement of fact.

The progress in soccer as far as media output in the last five years has been of a quantum leap nature.

But more is still needed, much more.

Cadet League anomaly
Hello to the people Administering the Amateur leagues in NSW.

In the season of 1998 my son was a player in the local Illawarra soccer club with Figtree Junior Soccer club.

They are wonderful people managing the largest junior soccer club in the Illawarra.

My son was a player in the Under 10's 1st division team and he enjoyed it as a player immensely.

Over the summer months he decided that he would try out for the Illawarra Under 11's representative side and also the Illawarra Lions new Under 11's cadet league side.

He just missed when the side was cut to 16 and was disappointed.

But I pointed out to him that if you have any inkling of a professional career in soccer this will happen over and over again.

Well he tried for the Lions cadet league side and made it into their squad; obviously he was overjoyed.

He asked me if he could register with a local club as well.

My initial reaction was no, thinking that it would be to much for him, but he has always wanted to play goalkeeper and I caved in.

I would not let him try out for the Figtree club as they have an excellent keeper there in the 11

year old group.

After talking to a number of people in the Coniston Junior soccer club I found out that, they were looking for an 11 year old keeper for their first division side.

Arrangements were made for my son to trial with them, they had brought in a keeper from another Illawarra premier league senior team to test him out, the verdict was that he has potential as a keeper with training.

The scene was set; he would play keeper with the local Coniston club. He has trained continuously with Coniston and the Lions (as an outfield player with the Lions).

I registered him with the Coniston club, paid my \$50 registration fee,

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Letters on any football related subject are welcome but should reach us by Friday morning prior to print to reach the next deadline.

(This letter was also sent to the NSWASF.)

We have printed most of its contents because it touches on a very real problem for parents.

I could be smart and write that if you had been a regular reader of Inside Soccer then you would have more knowledge of the situation.

But that would help nobody.

The problem is that your son wants to register with clubs who operate under the auspices of two different federations.

The Cadet League is under the control of the NSW Soccer Federation, the local Illawarra juniors under the control of the NSW Amateur SF.

In Illawarra the ISA registers its junior players through the Amateurs and the seniors through the Federation so the complication gets bigger.

Next week I'll speak to officials from all three organisations and maybe we'll get some answers. - Ed.

Common Sense

THE recent news that Oceania will have direct qualification to the 2006 World Cup must have the Kiwis jumping for joy.

I really don't know much of the management of soccer in NSW only there is a federation and the amateurs, I then think who is Soccer NSW.

My boy has potential to develop as a keeper and a player who no doubt will eventually make up his mind where he wants to play - this is not coming from me its always up to the boy, I only lay his options on the table and he decides.

Gregory Plakias for Christian Alexander

Plakias aged 11 and a soccer player Figtree, NSW

This is because they have developed greater teamwork and understanding through hours training and playing together.

Soccer Australia will be condemned by future generations for this decision.

Soccer in Australia needs the impetus of a successful Socceroo side, for it is only through media attention that soccer will enter mainstream, consciousness.

Such attention will mainly be achieved by the Socceroos playing on the world stage, as witnessed during that memorable encounter with Iran.

If we are not on that stage, Australian soccer will not reach the heights it so richly deserves.

Again, soccer administrators (I will not mention the Confederations Cup debacle) have failed to use that apparent rare commodity at Soccer Australia, common sense.

'Never give the sucker an even break,' as the saying goes.

The All Blacks have

revelled for years in dominating and humiliating their opposition.

I have nothing personal against the Kiwis, but I am quite sure if the boot was on the other foot they would not let Australia join their domestic competition.

The All Whites will be playing together every week in the Australian competition.

Make no mistake, this side, man for man less skilled than the Socceroos, can beat a team of overseas stars thrown together only weeks before the play offs, and with little preparation.

Many English Premier league teams are quite capable of defeating the current English international side.

Will soccer ever learn.

Gary Brooke
Casula NSW

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Coyne waiting for his chance

ENGLISH Premier league side West Ham United is currently home to two Australians, Stan Lazaridis and Chris Coyne.

While Lazaridis is a regular in the senior squad, Coyne is starting to make his own impact in that direction, and is confident that senior football is not too far away.

"Things are looking good here at West Ham at the moment," says the youngster who originally hails from West Australia.

BERNAL OFF

After starting the match, Andrew Bernal was sent off in the 39th minute for serious foul play in recent match as Reading won 2-1 at home to Wycombe Wanderers.

Bernal, the former Sydney Olympic defender has now been sent off twice this season.

lia.

"I'm being put into the squad of 18 on a weekly basis - at the moment.

"The boss is going with experience on the bench so I'm just missing out, but that will come with time.

"I must admit I was stressing a little bit before Christmas, but now I'm really enjoying myself."

"I think coming back to play for the Olyroos in January really helped, it broke the monotony of what I felt was week in week out with no rewards, but now I feel a lot better and the opportunities are showing themselves.

"I speak with my manager on a regular basis, and he's aware of my desire to be playing first team football on a weekly basis - there has been talk of loaning me out but for the moment I'm staying put with West Ham."

The West Australian is known more for his defensive qualities than strike action, but he was in the right place at the

right time a couple of weeks ago, although at this stage he's not pressing for a move up front.

"Yeah, I scored my first goal against Reading a couple of weeks ago in the reserves," says Coyne.

"OK, just in case you hear it from someone else, it was a header which could have gone anywhere - but it went into the back of the net, and I got my first goal."

At least this Aussie Abroad has the benefit of having an experienced Socceroo with him, to help him through the more difficult times ... or should that be 'had the benefit'??

"Having Stan (Lazaridis) here at the club is great because it's not just a motivation for me.

"We also get on really well even though we don't really mix in the same social group because of the age difference - he's old you know - no, you wouldn't print that would you?"

FORMER South Melbourne star Tansel Baser made the move to Turkey over Christmas, and hasn't looked back.

He is a regular member of the starting line-up, his club is amongst the Turkish First Division top four teams and looking at Europe - and the atmosphere is second to none.

"Today's home win was excellent, but last week I played the full 90 minutes against Fenerbahce, a team that plays regularly in the European competitions, and it was the best feeling, I just can't describe the atmosphere," Baser told *Inside Soccer* last weekend.

"That was an away game for us and there were about 35,000 people there and they wouldn't stop singing.

"We still have to play Galatasaray and Besiktas, and these games will be very special because they have to come to us.

"We are expecting more than 45,000 people, provided we keep performing, and it's really

something to look forward to."

Trabzonspor hasn't won a title in 14 years, so the pressure is on from the fans, but it's something that Baser just takes in his stride.

"The place I'm staying in, Trabzon isn't quite like Istanbul and there aren't many places to go out and have fun, or go shopping, unlike the places where some of my friends have ended up," he said.

"I wake up, go to training, come back, lunch, rest - that's my whole day here - but that's what I'm here to do, and at no time have I questioned the move - I'm very happy with it.

"This team will definitely play in Europe next year, probably in the UEFA Cup and I hope we come up against a really big club first round, because if you show yourself there, you never know what might happen."

Unlike the more temperate climate experi-

enced by Kosta Salapasi-dis in Spain, headquarters for Baser is 50 metres away from the Black Sea where unfortunately at near zero degrees, the weather's too cold for a dip.

Not quite the same as the sweltering conditions he left in Australia, with his South Melbourne "family" being the one with the interpreter," says Baser, who holds dual Australian and Turkish citizenship.

"It works OK - he'll say a few sentences and then the interpreter kicks in - I listen to both, so I can see whether the coach is actually doing the coaching, or whether the interpreter has decided to have a go!"

Either way, Tansel Baser and Trabzonspor are headed for big things.

No Dutch treat for Ante

FORMER Sydney United Ante Milicic star has been substituted in NAC Breda's last two games, both losses, as the Dutch club has slipped to last place in the First Division.

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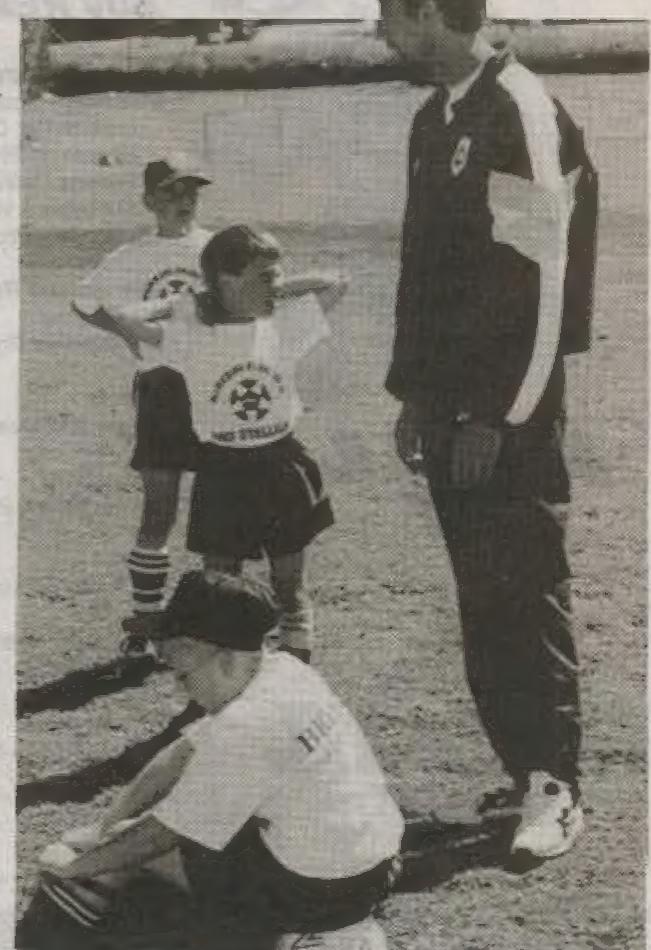
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of Club Marconi to act for me, according to their best judgement, in any emergency requiring medical attention. I further release Club Marconi and staff from any and all liability for injury or illness incurred at the coaching clinic.



The Youngest NSL Player In History?

ACCORDING to VIS Head Coach Ernie Merrick, one Scott McDonald is possibly the youngest player to set foot on NSL turf.

The VIS player was on loan to Gippsland Falcons, was born on the 21st August 1983 and is part of the young brigade on tour to Johor Bahru on April 4 together with 19 other young guns from the VIS.

McDonald would have been 15 years and about 7 months on debut.

That ranks closely to debutantes such as John Markovski (Sunshine George Cross) and Malcolm Meilak (Parramatta Eagles) who were also in that late 15 year old category.

Historians of the game can probably name several more including Peter Raskopoulos who turned out for Marconi Fairfield at a similar age. (Sorry guys, you're both wrong. A quick flick at the *Asics Australian Soccer Yearbook* tells me that Daniel Watkins made his debut for Parramatta Eagles in 1995 to claim the record - watch out for the reprint due out in June of this year. - Ed).

VIS On Overseas Tour

THE start of the Australian Under 20 World Youth Cup campaign in Nigeria also coincides with the VIS tour of Malaysia which takes in a two week, four game itinerary organised by former AIS Head Coach Ron Smith (pictured) who assisted Merrick.

All but one of the touring party is eligible for Aussie representation at either Under 17 or Under 21 level in 99, 2001 or 2003.

Former South Melbourne defender Aaron Healey will act as assistant coach.

Old Habits Die Hard

NEWCASTLE Breakers keeper Bob

WHEATLEY'S WORLD



Catlin has continued to maintain good form on and off the park.

Wheatley's World witnessed Catlin in not so rare form off the field at a recent Northern Spirit fixture.

Feeling slightly peckish after heading back from a return Newcastle to Sydney training session Catlin instructed teammate Glen Sprod to do the business.

During a slow period in the first

half Sprod dashed off to a return minutes later with the ammunition.

Four steak sandwiches were delivered pronto to an eager Catlin.

The goods were split - but not on an equal basis.

Foot In Mouth

AT THE head of ABC's TV Match of the Round last week I felt both Marconi and Carlton were set to pro-

duce a 'ripper'.

The two sides were facing an early exit from the contention for the finals race.

By half time many in the gallery felt the players should have repaid the small crowd their ticket price such was the poor show.

Marconi boss Tony Labbozzetta agreed in his post match assessment.

Thankfully three late goals within a

final flurry of activity sealed the match for the fortunate Fairfielders.

Major Crowds Expected

TICKET sales for the Women's World Cup look set to reach some record heights in June this year.

The Matildas who are set to perform in Boston, Washington DC and New York/New Jersey will feature before some of the biggest careers of their lives.

Should they proceed past the group matches they will move onto either San Francisco or Washington.

Web site Update

SOCOG outlined last week the predicted amount of traffic to visit the site during the 17 day festival of sport.

Before announcing their prediction Mark Jackson, head of SOCOG Internet, referred the group to Atlanta statistics.

The official site in Atlanta received 187,000,000 hits, Nagano which was a smaller winter campaign was visited 634,716,480 times and the Sydney base, launched in June, is expected to attract several billion hits such is the depth and diversity of Sydney's first class Internet home.

Top Six Contenders Finalised

Only eight sides have a realistic chance of taking this season's NSL Championship.

Brisbane Strikers, Northern Spirit and Marconi kept the lifeline open with crucial victories.

Brisbane face the most difficult away assignment in Round 27 on the road to South Melbourne.

The champions will be flat out over Easter with a March 31 thriller against third placed Glory.

ABC cameras will be heading to South Australia for the traditional derby between City and Sharks.

Damianos enjoying life at Xanthi

OLYROO Bill Damianos has enjoyed mixed on-field fortunes at his new Greek club, Skoda Xanthi, since transferring this season.

"I've been playing quite regularly and out of the 24 games or so I would have started half of them and come off the bench for most of the others so I'm just taking my chances when I can," says Damianos.

"It took a little while to settle in more because of the different climate than anything else, but the past eight months have gone really quickly."

"It's (seems) like yesterday I can remember leaving Melbourne airport."

In fact, Damianos and his former South Melbourne team-mate Tansel Baser could almost be living parallel lives with their respective clubs, so similar are their personal and club aims.

"The club I'm with is in a small town, but known to produce a lot of good players," says Damianos.

"Their main focus is to get into Europe and then to sell the young players, and start the process again. We're currently

running sixth on the ladder and with the top six teams going into Europe we're still in the qualifying process, and just

have to prove consistent - and I know my opportunities will come."

While speaking the language makes life so

much easier, and lunch in a typical Greek taverna is part of normal life, Damianos does miss his family and team-mates, although

South Melbourne was brought a lot closer recently.

"I was flicking the stations on the TV the other

day and there was the grand prix live from Melbourne, so I got this big pang of home-sickness," he says. "It was really

weird seeing Albert Park especially sitting in my apartment in Greece, but after eight months away I really enjoyed it."



Bill Damianos: how the South Melbourne fans remember him

He's The Undisputed King of Australian Football

Kresimir Marusic speaks of life, ambitions and football at Northern Spirit

by Stuart Jones

WE HAVE all read articles on what it is like to be an Australian professional footballer and play away from Australia but too often it is forgotten that the same sorts of problems are dealt with every day by those boys who have come to Australia from overseas to play.

Northern Spirit star Kresimir Marusic is one of those imports, although he has been around for long enough now that many to think of him as an Aussie.

"It is hard, I have a young family and they should always come first," he says openly.

"I love this country, I am proud of what I have achieved here, it is so relaxed and wonderful."

"That is not to say that we do not miss Croatia.

"I have family and friends over there, I have not been back for so long due to me changing clubs in Australia.

"I get home sick around Christmas and New Year, after all my mother and a lot of friends are back there.

"Plus my wife has all her friends and family over there.

"There are so many little things that you miss out on.

"For example my wife and I may want to go out for the evening.

"We have to get a babysitter as there is no family here and you are never 100% comfortable whilst you are out, you can't enjoy yourself as much as you would like.

"Other players in the team are younger with girlfriends or just newly married, it is tough on my wife to make lots of friends as she has to look after the girls all the time whilst I am away.

"I think it would be great to go back to Croatia for a couple of months just to relax.

"Then when I come back I think I can enjoy myself more and concentrate on the game, it would be a good pressure reliever.

"However I would want to come back because this country and my friends here are a really big part of me."

Part of the problem has been moving between Melbourne and Sydney between clubs, but Marusic has found Northern Spirit to be much to his liking.

"This club has tried to do things differently," he says of the club which has taken the country by storm.

"We tried on the park to play more of a European style,

one touch and hold possession until an opportunity comes.

"Training is much more European based and is always different.

"It is not similar to anything I have had before in Australia, more like back in Croatia.

"I had a great time at the Knights and Sydney United as we had winning sides, however this season has been my most enjoyable in Australia because we have played good soccer.

"What is more I feel I am a better player because my team mates are using me properly, I am getting the ball at my feet more often and have been given freedom on the park.

"I prefer the free role in the middle of the park as I can make my own space with the ball.

"I can make plenty of runs off the ball but I am half the player I am when I have the ball at my feet.

"The team spirit is great at the club.

"I am lucky that we picked up so many class players, including six internationals, so we play good football.

"We should be even better but we started from nothing this season and it is hard to mould 20 players together into a team."

His thoughts on the style of play gives an indication of what Kresimir Marusic thinks of playing up front.

"I am only comfortable up there if we are playing certain styles of football," he says.

"At Northern Spirit we play that nice build up work and play to feet so I am happier up front.

"If we were playing the long ball game, or more of an English style I think I would be very unhappy.

"I am no use to anyone when the ball is played in the air.

"The other thing is that I have found I am man marked by up to two players this season.

"It makes things more difficult for me but it can work out to help the team.

"Those markers have to follow me everywhere, even if I am not involved in the game much which frees up one of my team mates.

"If my team mates play well then we can use it to our advantage.

"The other thing about markers is they have to follow you for the full ninety minutes.

"If you concentrate on the game the whole time you will

always pick up one or two chances.

"They will leave you for two or three seconds, and if you are good enough you will take full advantage of it.

"Sometimes it is hard to concentrate, especially at North Sydney Oval with the crowd and everything going on around you.

"If things go wrong on the field you can get frustrated and try to change the world on the park but by then you are not focusing on the game and you will lose out on the half chance you will be presented.

"The crowd makes a big difference.

"Playing in front of 17 thousand each week is a huge buzz.

"When I was back in Croatia the war was on so I only played in front of crowds of 10,000 or so.

"It is great to play in front of so many happy people, and it is great to say they really enjoy it.

"As for the playing surface itself it is really quick out there, and is slippery in the middle.

"I think, however, that next season will show our advantage at home as we will be so familiar with the ground as compared to the opposition who will play here just the once.

"That once is always a big game for the opposition, though.

"When they come to North Sydney Oval they can go out with a 'can't lose' attitude and really take it to us.

"I also think some teams motivate themselves because we are a professional club and because of our budget and the way things are so well down around here.

"They get a boost in front of 17 thousand people as well, and it is like a grand final atmosphere for both sets of players."

Kresimir Marusic is not a player who sets targets at the start of a season, instead he takes it one step at a time.

"I look at the beginning to pick up my form and then hold it as long as I can," he says.

"Form comes and goes, it does for all players wherever they play around the world.

"You try to maintain your top form and if you can do that then maybe you see what you can achieve.

"You look for a Top Six finish, then a top two, then a Grand Final appearance.

"You reassess as you go



Melbourne Knights, Sydney United, Carlton and now Northern Spirit; one thing has remained constant - Kresimir Marusic has been a class act wherever he has gone

along the way, setting targets that are realistically attainable."

However, along the way little injuries and the like have stalled Marusic's progress this year.

"It has been a bother in terms of injuries," he says.

"They are little things like corks, or I will roll my ankle."

"In the last four weeks I have missed two games, one due to injury the other due to suspension.

"It is annoying that those little things can make such a big difference.

"It is just great to be back when you get out there once more.

"I am the worst watcher of football as I want to be out there, helping the team."

Marusic has plans for the future and that includes dreams of playing in Europe

once more.

"It is all still up in the air but perhaps I will play next season in Europe, Spain or Greece or something," he says.

"I think it is time for a change for me again and I still want to answer the question can I make it there?"

"I want to play two or three seasons over there and show that Australian and Croatian players have got skill and be a representative of both the country of my birth and the nation I have adopted as my own.

"After two or three years over there I dream of returning to Australia and playing out my career here."

As for international football?

"I miss it a lot," says the Spirit midfieler.

"You watch the World Cup

and the like and you know it is the pinnacle for any footballer.

"I yearn for that level of competition and to take pride in the country of Australia at that level."

Kresimir Marusic is an outstanding ambassador for our game.

All the problems off the pitch that a foreigner has he has overcome.

He is doing the best for his family whilst playing a style of the game of football that the fans love to watch.

So many ask where is his best position but like so many players of his class the only answer can be on the pitch anywhere, he can make a difference to a game in an instant.

He has graced Australia's fields of play for a while now, hopefully it will continue for

Young Socceroos make it five zip

World Youth
Championships 1999
NIGERIA April 3-24

Versus Walwijk

March 23

AUSTRALIA continued its positive build-up to next month's World Youth Cup, drawing 1-1 with Dutch First Division club RKC Waalwijk in Holland last Tuesday.

The game was the first in a short series as the Young Socceroos entered their final preparations for Nigeria and their opening encounter with Saudi Arabia.

In their third practice game of the European camp, the Young Socceroos went behind in the 33rd minute despite dominating play for the first 25 minutes after Waalwijk capitalised on a smart counter attack.

The Australians kept their composure against the more experienced Dutch opposition, and had second-half chances fall to Mile Sterjovski, John Maisano and David Terminello.

The equaliser came in the final minutes, when Jason Culina provided a pin-point cross into the penalty area and captain Simon Colosimo

headed the ball into the back of the net.

Coach Les Scheinflug was pleased with Australia's work rate and the improving understanding and cohesion on the pitch.

"This match was the toughest test for us so far and the players responded well to the pressure of being up against such strong and highly fancied opposition," he said.

"We are continuing to improve with every match and without exception, each player is going out and playing as though each game is the World Cup."

"I am confident that with the determination that the players are showing, the team will be in top shape by the time we reach Nigeria."

Versus Feyenoord

March 26

Group A
(playing in Lagos)
Nigeria,
Costa Rica,
Germany,
Paraguay.

AUSTRALIA beat Dutch First Division Club Feyenoord 3-nil in a friendly in Rotterdam on Thursday, to remain undefeated in the lead up to the World Youth Soccer Cup.

Sydney United striker Mile Sterjovski got things off to a cracking start for the Young Socceroos in the 4th minute, latching onto a ball from Lindsay Wilson and keeping a cool head to slot the ball past the keeper for the first of the Australian goals.

With Vince Grella controlling the game from the midfield, and Eddy Bosnar dictating the backs, it was fitting for that duo to combine for Australia's second goal.

From a free kick taken from 35 metres out, Grella played the ball to Bosnar, whose left footer rocketed into the top left corner of the goal, leaving

the Feyenoord goalkeeper stranded and Australia up 2-nil at the 18th minute mark.

The Young Socceroos then wrapped things up ten minutes from time, Northern Spirit's Michael Cunico volleying a Christian Care corner into the back of the net, Australia wrapping up a 3-nil victory.

Coach Les Scheinflug was again very pleased with his team, particularly with those boys who had until now not been in the starting line up.

"Everyone has had a particularly tough build-up to this World Cup, so today I decided to rest some of the players who had started the three previous games we've played," said Scheinflug.

"It gave the rest of the squad players a chance to prove themselves, and that's exactly what they went out and did, which

leaves me with a nice head-ache going into Nigeria."

Versus Vitesse

ON Saturday the Young Socceroos wrapped up their pre-Nigeria preparations with a 2-nil win over Dutch First Division side Vitesse Arnhem in Holland.

Australia started the game tentatively against their more experienced opponents - Vitesse is currently second in Holland's top League - but soon settled to show the form of previous games.

Striker Danny Invincible had Australia's first real opportunity, going one on one with the Arnhem keeper in the 22nd minute, but putting his shot just wide.

Five minutes later, the Carlton duo of Marco Bresciano and Simon Colosimo did put the Young Socceroos on the

board, captain Colosimo volleying a corner from Bresciano into the back of the net, putting Australia up 1-nil in the 27th minute.

The duo was also responsible for Australia's second goal, Bresciano again delivering a pinpoint corner into the goal-mouth, with Colosimo this time heading the ball in the near post for a 2-nil score-line in the 62nd minute.

John Maisano came close to putting the Australians even further ahead after being put through on goal by Invincible, but his shot went wide, the Young Socceroos having to content themselves with a 2-nil victory.

"Vitesse could have beaten us badly if the boys didn't work as hard as they did."

AUSTRALIA's three games in the first round of the WORLD YOUTH CUP will be broadcast live on SBS with the first match, Australia v Saudi Arabia on air from midnight (EST) Sunday April 4.

Group B
(Kaduna)
Ghana,
Croatia, Argen-
tina,
Kazakhstan

Group C
(Ibadan)
Australia,
Saudi Arabia,
Mexico,
Ireland.

Group D
(Enugu)
Uruguay,
Mali,
Korea,
Portugal.

Group E
(Kano and Bauchi)
Cameroon,
Mali,
England,
United States.

Group F
(Port Harcourt and
Calabar)
Zambia,
Honduras, Spain,
Brazil.

Bugsy's View

with Marconi skipper Brad Maloney

WHILE the league table may suggest otherwise at the moment, if Marconi make the Top Six then watch us go!

I can honestly say that there is no team that we are afraid of, and the players would relish the opportunity to prove some of our critics wrong.

We have been written off by some sections of the press probably two or three times so far this season, but until it is mathematically impossible for us to make the finals, I can assure you that we will be fighting all the way.

Recent results in the league have shown what a topsy turvy competition the NSL can be, and nobody, even with only a few games to go, can take it for granted that the final make up of the Top Six is assured. Watch this space...

LAST week Marconi President Tony Labbozzetta announced some exciting improvements to the Marconi set up.

Already under construction is a new indoor sports complex which will cater for indoor soccer, and there are plans for another two outdoor pitches which will be used for the development of junior players, with the Southern Districts Junior Soccer Association sharing use of those new facilities.

It was also announced that the club has submitted a Development Application to Fairfield City Council seeking to add motel type accommodation to the club, and once that is built Marconi will surely be the envy of many sporting clubs throughout Australia.

IT HAS been a few years since I graduated from my last place of learning, but I'm really looking forward to the coming school

holidays.

Along with coach Frank Farina and several fellow Marconi players I've volunteered to help out at the Marconi soccer clinic. As professionals we tend to get caught up in the pressure of modern soccer and sometimes temporarily forget what the game is all about - fun.

The soccer clinics at Marconi are always well attended and it will be great to be able to put something back in to the game at the grass roots level.

International players such as Harry Kewell, Mark Bosnich, Paul Okon and Italy's Christian Vieri were all Marconi juniors at some stage of their careers, and who knows, maybe the next Harry Kewell will be discovered at the forthcoming coaching clinic.

One thing is certain though, the clinics promise to be a lot of fun for players and coaches alike.

ROBERT Neesam of Juvena Australia will long remember last week's Marconi sponsors' lunch as he was the lucky winner of first prize in the raffle, an airline ticket to Europe.

Juvena Australia are the suppliers of perfume and make up products to our cheer squad, the Marconi Stallionettes, so he was a very popular winner.

There is also a rumour going around that a well known Scottish identity at the club only bought his raffle tickets after being 'threatened' with exposure as a cheapskate by a well known Australian media man.

THEY may not get the publicity they deserve, but the Marconi women's team is right up there with the best of them.

For the second year in a row, our women's team have taken out the prestigious Mitchell Cup,

making it their third success since the competition started five years ago.

The Mitchell Cup is a pre season competition organised by the Bathurst and Mitchell District Soccer Association, and attracts entries from numerous women's Super League and State League sides.

15 teams took part in this year's tournament and ultimately Marconi defeated Gladysville 2-0 in the final, after having claimed the scalps of Sydney United, Manly, St George and UWS Macarthur along the way.

Based on their performance in the Mitchell Cup I'm sure that coach Roy Kimber and the girls can look forward to an exciting season.

THE WORLD Youth Cup is due to kick off soon, and Marconi has two representatives in the squad in the shape of Christian Care and Danny Invincible.

Christian and Danny have been involved in all the warm up games so far in Holland, and I'm sure that when they get to Nigeria and take part in the competition proper, that it will be an unforgettable experience for them.

I had the good fortune to take part in the 1991 tournament in Portugal, and it was definitely one of the highlights of my career.

I'm sure that Danny and Christian will return from Nigeria better players for having played against some of the world's best young players and will use the experience as a stepping stone in their career.

I wish them well, and will be following the progress of the Young Socceroos closely in the next few weeks.

"You are invited to a special event"

TOP OF THE TABLE CLASH

Sydney United

v

South Melbourne

SYDNEY UNITED SPORTS CENTRE

223 Edensor Road, Edensor Park

SUNDAY APRIL 11 1999

NOTE ALTERED

KICK OFF TIME OF 3pm

*Witness the Grand Final
Dress Rehearsal*

Sermanni to rebuild the Cosmos

by Nick Guoth

HIGHLY successful Canberra Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni put pen to paper last Tuesday and signed a one year extension to his current contract.

The deal means he can continue his good work in putting Canberra back on the map with regard to Ericsson Cup soccer.

The signing comes on the back of a great win by his side against Northern Spirit in Sydney only four days before, this being the first away win for the Cosmos since December 1995.

Canberra Cosmos chairman Ian Knop said: "I'm delighted Tom has signed."

"Tom has brought stability as well as providing the concept of the local-boy coming back."

Knop describes Sermanni as being balanced and not erratic, but just as important.

"He has been a pleasure to work with," says the chairman.

"Tom understands soccer, he understands the Cosmos and Canberra."

"The results show eve-



Left to right: Mike Lyons 1995-1997, Branko Culina 1997-1998*, Walter Valeri 1998 (caretaker), Rale Rasic 1998*, Tony Brennan 1998-1999 (caretaker), Tommy Sermanni from January 1999

rything and it is obvious our current place does a great base."

Sermanni signed with



Cosmos chairman Ian Knop

self replaced Rale Rasic. Sermanni will face the same obstacles that Rasic, Branko Culina and Mike Lyons encountered in their terms as the Cosmos coach; lack of finances being the most

part in the revitalisation of the club.

Sermanni was pleased to place pen to the dotted line on Tuesday.

"I've enjoyed the job," he said.

"I've had a good response from the players.

"We can sit down now and start working out what to do.

"With the list of players no longer under contract released this last week, Tom can see that there is a lot of work to do in maintaining the

results have come at the end of the season, so other clubs could be wary of our players.

"Hopefully they will stay."

"I intend to try to convince our key players to stay."

"I intend to try to convince our key players to stay."

But he is a local boy, having played and coached in the Canberra area for quite some time.

His knowledge of a number of the players and his overall cunning could play an important

"We have had some good results on the field, and it all comes about through a good base."

"Knowing that we will be in the league next year has made the decision much easier."

squad which he has now.

A number of his players have already been looked at with a keen eye by some of the more high profile clubs.

But Tom is hopeful. "Fortunately, good

Will Sermanni be looking at new players from elsewhere?

He states that his first priority is to sort our players to keep.

Then he will look into the market.

*The Ericsson Cup
champions live at
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SOUTH MELBOURNE
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PERTH GLORY
(deferred Round 23 match)

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Spirit ban Johnson for life after Wollongong arrest

by Hugo Ulrike

NORTHERN Spirit chairman Remo Nogarotto has stood by his earlier promise to ban supporters found guilty of misbehaviour by implementing a life ban from all Northern Spirit matches at North Sydney Oval on a British backpacker.

Stewart Johnson pleaded guilty to charges of assault and resisting arrest charges at Brandon Park Wollongong when he appeared in Wollongong court on Tuesday.

Nogarotto immediately banned him from all matches under Northern Spirit's control at North Sydney Oval.

"I said at the time of the incident that anyone found guilty would be banned for life and now one man has been found guilty by the courts he is no longer welcome at North Sydney Oval," Nogarotto said.

"We have worked hard to

provide a safe environment for our fans and we will not put up with it.

"Our loyal supporters remember who he is and what he looks like and if he is sighted inside North Sydney Oval we will be told and he will be ejected."

Nogarotto said none of the Northern Spirit's loyal supporters was involved in the incidents at Brandon Park on February 28.

Wollongong police said no-one else was found guilty of offences after the events of February 28.

"Our hard core fans, the guys who come every week and have created the unique atmosphere at North Sydney Oval, were not involved in the problems," Nogarotto said.

"The guy found guilty was a British tourist with no link to Northern Spirit."



*Stewart Johnston:
pictured leaving
Wollongong Court last week*

"We will continue to work with our fans to ensure the bad apples who infiltrate the supporters do not ruin what we have at North Sydney Oval."

Another Northern Spirit supporter, Christopher John Thorne, has been bailed to appear in court on April 27.

INSIDE SOCCER Australia's weekly soccer Bible
OUT EVERY TUESDAY from coast to coast

IT'S THE FINALS COUNTDOWN

by Alan Clark

FOUR games to go for most NSL sides, and there are still nine teams with real Finals chances.

Two sides have wrapped up a Finals spot - South Melbourne and Sydney United, and Perth Glory are as good as confirmed.

There's nothing between these three, and just to add a bit of spice to the contest, South and Perth are still to play their postponed round 23 match in midweek.

South is to meet: Perth (H), Brisbane (H), Sydney United (A), and Canberra (H).

Bob Jane, and on a mid-week night, which may tip the balance in South's favour.

Sydney United's four remaining are: Canberra (A), South (H), Falcons (A), and Sharks (H).

It's a draw that United would be very happy with and should be able to pencil in at least three wins.

If United also beat South, Sydney United will finish either first or second and get the Finals double-chance.

Perth has the best goal-difference of the three sides, and so holds that key advantage in a tight contest.

Carlton's loss to Marconi on the weekend effectively rules them out of May action, unless some particularly wacky results start coming in.

Brisbane's run is perhaps the easiest of the three: South Melbourne (A), Falcons (H), Sharks (A), Breakers (H).

Although the game at Bob Jane might look tough, it will be South's third in a week, as South will have played the catch-up match against Perth Glory midweek.

Although Brisbane's run home is easier, there's still the chance that it misses out because - paradoxically - it does

and Spirit.

It can make up the points deficit by winning these games, so Newcastle is in more control of its Finals destiny than Brisbane.

Newcastle can still make it, and if it does, it will be Breakers' recent form that will give it some momentum.

If Newcastle drops points against Adelaide City or Spirit, it's missed the Finals boat.

Marconi has a good run home - a mix of lowly teams and fellow challengers, so it too is in some control of its chances: Knights (H), Wolves (A), Adelaide

positive.

Spirit is therefore slightly more vulnerable than the other two, despite being the current leader of this threesome.

If Spirit loses games to its challengers, not only do the points totals overlap, so too does the goal-difference.

Spirit faces Falcons (A), Sharks (H), Breakers (A), and Marconi (A).

Win two and Spirit should be safe.

Lose three and it'll likely be replaced.

Spirit's form has been inconsistent, so it's a taster's nightmare.

I think it's more likely that Spirit get in than fail, but it could go either way.

The key fixture is the game at Marconi.

Sydney Olympic has a tough run home: Carlton (H), Knights (A), Wolves (H), and Adelaide City (A).

Win three and play in May

Lose three and they're likely out.

I can as easily see three wins as three losses, but reckon Olympic is more likely in than not.

Adelaide City knows what this end of the season is all about, and won't be fazed by what seems the toughest run home of this trio: Sharks (A), Breakers (H), Marconi (A), and Olympic (H).

The Adelaide derby is a game that defies form, and there's bound to be some feeling in the Marconi fixture for all reasons of recent history between the two clubs, as well as it being critical for both clubs.

Playing three challengers in the last three rounds will be where Adelaide City makes or breaks its season.

Adelaide City stays in.

My Final six is: Sydney United over South by a win, with Perth one win behind in third place.

Northern Spirit fourth by two points over Adelaide City, then Olympic two points lower in sixth.

Marconi and Brisbane miss out by one win, with Breakers falling away.

I reckon the Finals are therefore:

South Melbourne v Sydney United
Perth v Olympic
Northern Spirit v Adelaide City
Perth and Adelaide City to meet in the Preliminary Final, but South and Sydney United will face off in the Grand Final.

CAREER VACANCIES with DUNTROON PUBLISHING

Duntroon Publishing's *Inside Soccer* is widely recognised as Australia's leading soccer publication. With a 50,000 readership it has set a new benchmark in soccer publishing. Duntroon also publish a number of other soccer related and non-related publications including a new mainstream weekly newspaper which is set for April release.

Vacancies exist within our publishing framework as we strive to improve our productions and increase our range.

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Perth Glory: will they miss out on the 1999 Grand Final?

It's a particularly tough fixture-list.

The games against Perth and then Sydney United will determine the league championship and a top-two finish.

South could finish first, second, or third with each as likely as the others. South's season will rest on the direct results against Perth and Sydney United.

By winning these, South retains the league championship and gets the double chance in the Finals.

South faces Perth at

Perth's remaining games are: South (A), Carlton (A), Knights (H), and Wolves (A).

If Perth beats South, Perth will get the double-chance. Whatever happens, Perth should experience Finals action for the first time.

So realistically, three of the six are still open, with six teams the most likely contestants: Adelaide City, Sydney Olympic, and Northern Spirit have the advantage at present, but Marconi, Newcastle, and Brisbane can take advantage of any slips.

One advantage the Breakers have is playing two of the teams it is chasing - Adelaide City

not face one of the three it needs to displace.

There's a slim chance Brisbane might get a Finals place, but it will have to make up two wins.

It can make up one on each of Adelaide City and Spirit by winning the direct contest, but has to look for those sides also to lose elsewhere.

Like Newcastle, failing to take the points against Adelaide City and Spirit means they rest from April. Spirit, Olympic, and Adelaide City have at least a three points advantage at the moment, but Spirit's goal-difference is only just

DAVO IN PAHANG LIMBO

FORMER Socceroo Alan Davidson is reportedly locked in a contract dispute preventing him coaching in Malaysia or leaving his club Pahang.

Reports from Malaysia say the state federation there refused to accept his resignation and is forcing him to see out the 12 months of his contract.

To make matters worse, the state soccer authority has banned him from coaching, confining him to office work.

Reports in The Star newspaper say Davidson wants out but there's a reluctance to release him as he could claim a year's salary.

Pahang Football Association deputy president Tengku Abdul Rahman Sultan Ahmad Shah said Davidson had offered to resign but the association council was having none of it.

"We have decided not to let him go and want him to serve out his contract until he agrees



with the association's terms and conditions," he said.

Davidson, a former

Melbourne Knight, South Melbourne and Nottingham Forest defender, played for Pahang be-

tween 1991 and 1996 and then had a brief stint playing for the Knights before retiring.

It's no go for Horvat after missing out on deadline

by Hugo Ulrike

SOCEROO Steve Horvat's career is again on hold after the stopper was refused a work permit to join English second division club Fulham.

Horvat, a former Melbourne Knight, was cleared to join Crystal Palace two months ago in a deal which took him from Croatian club Hajduk Split to England.

Fulham coach Kevin Keegan then moved in to sign him but was told he had been refused a work permit.

With the transfer deadline having already run out, Horvat's career again appears to be in limbo.

The player's agent Barry Silkman told Brit-

ain's Daily Mirror Horvat had a work permit to sign for Palace but the deal collapsed at the last minute.

"Kevin agreed to take him on trial at Fulham for three or four days, but, after only one training session, he called me to say: 'This boy is good enough to play in the Premier League, never mind division two!'"

Silkman said he was flabbergasted that the Department of Employment had given Horvat a work permit two months ago but doesn't meet the criteria now," he said.



him one.

"Perhaps someone at the Football Association will tell us how a player qualifies for a work permit two months ago but doesn't meet the criteria now," he said.

Inside Soccer's TRIVIA MOMENTS

WHICH club won the first Australia Cup?
ANSWER: see Ram Scoreboard, p30

MARCONI FAIRFIELD MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

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MACARTHUR RAMS

PROFILE OF AN AUSTRALIAN SOCCER CLUB

Casey de Bruin: an unknown Rams legend

COACH Casey de Bruin is something of a legend in Australian soccer; but he is the kind of legend that many people have never heard of.

The current head coach of Macarthur Rams is not the kind of name which pops up in ready conversation for the vacant Socceroo job but there would be few of his peers who would dismiss his claims out of hand.

"I think Casey likes it that way," a Rams official told *Inside Soccer*.

"He made his choices in life and he is happy to be here."

"I don't have any doubts whatsoever that he has the talent necessary to coach at the highest level possible, and I include Australia, but jobs at that level really require as much media profile as ability."

"Look at Terry Venable - he is a perfect

example."

De Bruin is a Wollongong man.

He seems to be content with life on the South Coast and Macarthur is just under an hour's drive away from the NSW South Coast town.

With the fabulous beaches and easy way of life on offer it is little wonder that de Bruin opted for that particular lifestyle.

Even more so given the rat-race that Australian professional coaching has become.

In his younger days de Bruin debuted a player in the NSW Federation for South Coast United.

Since the early 60s his name and Wollongong have been synonymous and it is rare that he has been involved with any other region.

The Macarthur job is an obvious exception in a career which has also

seen him coach Wollongong in the National League, State League, the Illawarra Academy and just about every other decent job in the area.

So if his name is not that well known on the terraces just ask his peers.

"A top class coach," says one highly rated ex Australian international.

"In this game you need to have more than your fair share of luck - just to survive as a coach."

But that doesn't mean that de Bruin lacks ambition; far from it.

With Macarthur Rams he is in the middle of a building process, which will see the south western Sydney club perched on the edge of National League possibility.

There might be yet another chapter in the Casey de Bruin story to be written; one involving the NSL.



Rams providing pathway for over eight thousand players

THE Macarthur Rams are the representative teams of the Macarthur District Soccer Football Association, consisting of Super League squad (first, Under 21 and Under 18s), Super Youth League squads (Under 13s, 14s, 15s, 16s), Cadet League and Academy squads (Under 11s, 12s), Women's Super League squads (First and reserve grades) and Girls Inter Zone squads (Under 14s, 16s).

The 15 representative teams are drawn from a selection of 8,500 players within the

MDSFA, one of the fastest growing soccer areas in Australia.

The Macarthur Association, named after the region which it represents and which in turn was named after James Macarthur, pioneer of sheep farming in Australia, has earned a national reputation for its progressive approach to the round ball game.

"Our overall aim is to continue to improve the standards of administration and play throughout our region as well as to provide top quality rep-

resentative soccer for which our local juniors can strive," says official Gary Cremming.

"In recent years we have had several quality players coming through our ranks including Brett Emerton (Sydney Olympic and current Australian Olympic team captain), Matthew Langdon (Northern Spirit), Paul Reid (Wollongong Wolves), Shane Cansdell-Sherriff (NSWIS and soon to sign a contract with Leeds United) and David Reid (twice NSW Under 21 player of the year)."

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MACARTHUR RAMS



BACK ROW (Left to right): Casey de Bruin (coach), Peter Hunter, Aschner, David Bell, Richard Lure, Dion Vella, Sharpe, Col Smith (managing director), **FRONT ROW**: Lisa Raggio, Graham Watton, Ben Willard, Iain Merola, Colin McAusland, Matthew

NSW SUPER LEAGUE 1999



• Trevor Widdess, Martin Banks (captain)
• John Shanes, Knight, Tony Judd, John Gaskin
• Donald, Eric Williams, Shane Raynor, Adrian
Shea, Danny Cerjat.



MACARTHUR RAMS FIRST TEAM SQUAD PLAYER PROFILES



JOHN CRAWLEY

Goalkeeper, 27. In second year at Rams having joined from Blacktown City. Before that full-time pro with Colo Colo in Chile. Considered by most to be the outstanding goalkeeper in the Super League, where his acrobatic saves have kept the Rams alive in numerous games. Has a fondness for flair which makes him the subject of a weekly bet amongst the Rams Supporters Club as to what his hair colour for the day will be. Also double as the club's goalkeeping coach.



MARTIN BOURKE

Midfielder, 33. Club and team captain, having previously spent many seasons at the Wollongong Wolves in the NSL. Also spent time at Blacktown City. A rugged, physical midfielder who certainly lives by that adage 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going.' Controls the game from the centre of the park like the ultimate little general and thrives on the young legs of players like Reid and Rastall to run off him. Has a target of holding the League and Grand Final trophies over his head in what is probably his last season.

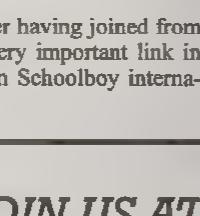


DANNY CERJAK

Defender, 28. Only recently returned from playing in Poland for 18 months. A member of the First Division championships team in 1994. Represented the NSW Super league select in 1996.

KAIN RASTALL

Defender, 20. In second year after having joined from NSL side Sydney Olympic. A very important link in the team and a former Australian Schoolboy international in 1996 and 1997.



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Wishing the Rams the best of luck for the 1999 season

Sixteen years of growth in Macarthur

E IDEA of forming a soccer association south of the Crossroads at Liverpool was first discussed in 1979.

By 1983 the MDSFA had become a reality and in 1984 it became an incorporated body with a charter of fostering, developing and promoting junior soccer in the Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly municipalities.

In the association's inaugural year there were 20 clubs registered; Bradbury/Ambarvale, Burragorang, Camcraft, Camden Tigers, Campbelltown City, Campbelltown Collegians, Campbelltown Districts (now Gunners United), Campbelltown Police Boys, Campbelltown RSL, Eschol Park, Ingleburn RSL, Johnson & Johnson, L&K Lions (now Leppington Lions), Macarthur Raiders, Macquarie Fields United (now Fields United), Minto Sports, Narellan, Tahmoor/Nepean Rovers, Picton Rangers and Ruse.



Thirteen clubs moved from the Southern Districts Association, three clubs from the old Southern Highlands Association and five new clubs were formed.

Since the association's inception clubs have passed by the way due to various reasons and have made way for new clubs.

Clubs newer to the association include Appin, Camden RSL, Campbelltown Southern Districts, Campbelltown Uniting and St Marys Eaglevale.

All of this makes the association 20 clubs strong.

Over the years Super League was supported by clubs outside the control of the MDSFA with some mixed success.

In 1987 Campbelltown City Soccer Club and Campbelltown Districts Soccer Club amalgamated, forming Campbelltown City and Districts SC which opened the door for negotiations between the Federation club of the area and the MDSFA.

This lead to the MDSFA and Campbelltown City and Districts SC agreeing on a change of colours of both bodies to make the identifiable step of furthering soccer and providing a career path for the region's better players.

Campbelltown and City Districts played out of Bensley Road Complex and the Junior Representative teams (Junior and Youth League) played out of Lynwood Park, St Helens Park which is now the home ground of the association.

The Super League and the association colours were changed to grey tops, maroon shorts and maroon socks.

Australia but played for Chile in the Under 17 World Youth Championship and collected a bronze medal. Also played for Colo Colo, Names Penrith Leagues Club as his favourite everything.



TREVOR WHIDDETT
Striker, 21. Second year with the Rams. Another former Wollongong Wolves player. Last season scored 9 goals for the club in Super League. Known as 'Tricky' and has a passion to meet Anna Kournikova.

ADRIAN MACEROLA
Midfielder, 23. Known as Artie, now in his third season with the club. Also known for his electrifying bursts down either wing. Former NSW Under 20 representative player.

SHANE KNIGHT
Midfielder, 21. Joined the Rams this year from

Super League side, Central Coast where he had been a regular since he was 18. Exciting wide player who has the speed to glide past opponents with ease. Also represented the NSW Super league select in 1997 and 1998 and NSW Under 20s in 1997. Has ambition to play National league.

SHAYNE RAYNER
Midfielder, 22. Local junior who has progressed right through the association ranks. Fourth year in the club's first grade squad. Recalls his best goal as the Golden Goal in the Under 21 final against Blacktown City.

BEN WILLARD
Sweeper/Defender, 21. Second year as a Ram, coming from Sydney Olympic. Rock solid sweeper who is also deceptively quick.



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Wishing the Rams the best of luck for the 1999 season

Berries find winning form

by Patrick Galloway

THE COLD and windy Wentworth Park was the venue last Sunday where Canterbury Marrickville were comprehensively demoralised three goals to one by an inspired Eastern Suburbs outfit.

Eastern Suburbs had been occupying last place on the Super League ladder before the match.

One could be forgiven for thinking that it was in fact the Berries who were in contention for the wooden spoon.

Coming off four losses in a row, Eastern Suburbs weren't expected to take the points let alone be competitive in this match-up, but some previously unseen spirit and determination had the Berries on the back foot from the outset.

The opening to the match was marked with some great running off the ball by Eastern Suburbs, dominating the Ber-

**EASTERN SUBURBS 3
CANTERBURY MARRICKVILLE 1**
Venue: Wentworth Park
Man of the Match: Vadim Mikoutski EASTERN SUBURBS

ries midfield who were caught out of position far too often, leaving the defence exposed to runs through the middle of the park and down the right hand flank from Steve McCombe.

McCombe was outstanding throughout the match, he was a constant target for some very effective long balls from Vadim Mikoutski, whose distribution from central midfield was pin-point.

No doubt a contributing factor to the demise of the Berries.

In the 28th minute, the home side's early domination was rewarded when a rampaging Vadim Mikoutski was brought down by Steve Christoforidis.

However, the Berries were without a real scoring opportunity in the first half, constantly turning the ball over and missing some vital tackles.

To their credit they did manage to combine for some attractive passages of play, mainly through the lively Jim Nikas and Steve Christoforidis.

While Canterbury keeper Steve Tolios was

setting his wall, an alert Mikoutski fired the ball low to the back post, beating a red-faced To-

hos.

The goal served as a realisation for Eastern Suburbs that this game was there for the taking.

Canterbury - Marrickville continued with their problematic first half, constantly turning the ball over and missing some vital tackles.

In the second period Canterbury began to fight harder, but Eastern Suburbs simply lifted another gear.

In the 58th minute, a quick one two on the left flank between Imaya and McCombe saw a w

Steve McCombe run down the right saw a cross delivered across the opposition goal mouth, landing at the feet of Naoki Imaya, who couldn't believe his luck.

He had time to compose himself and shoot just five metres out from the opposition goal.

Imaya easily put the ball to the right of a diving Tolios giving Eastern Suburbs a deserved 2 - 0 lead at the break.

In the second period Canterbury began to fight harder, but Eastern Suburbs simply lifted another gear.

In the 58th minute, a quick one two on the left flank between Imaya and McCombe cut inside his man and fire a tight angled shot from just inside the box.

The ball took a cruel deflection off the chest of Canterbury's Angelo Markopoulos,

wrong-footing Tolios and coming to rest in the back of the net.

Three goals down with forty minutes to play had many Canterbury fans worried in fear of more goals, but the Berries did

find some touch, finally stringing some passes together and reverting back to the tactics that

has them sitting on the up-side of the competi-

ROUND 8 ROUND-UP

Round 8 saw last season's Grand Finalists Blacktown City Demons and Bonnyrigg White Eagles do battle at the Gabbie Stadium, with Blacktown once again victorious. Four goals in 12 second half minutes saw the Demons home, although only after Bonnyrigg had looked more threatening for the first half-hour of the game. In fact, it was the White Eagles who scored first, with Paul Dee netting just four minutes into the second half, and it looked as if it was going to be a tight game.

Blacktown had other ideas though, as goals after 64 minutes to Jason Bennett, Damien Smith after 66, Chris Bradley after 70 and an own goal, after good work again by Bradley, after 76. Bonnyrigg pulled a goal back with just two minutes left through Colin Luff, but it proved a mere consolation.

A crowd of over 2,000 saw Macarthur Rams bounce back from last week's defeat at the hands of Fairfield Bulls. They left it late though, substitute Iain McDonald scoring his second goal of the season with just eight minutes to go. McDonald had come on with just thirty minutes left, but unfortunately for Parramatta their own late substitute, Malcolm Meilak, was sent off for two bookable offences just five minutes after coming on.

Bankstown City Lions overcame the shock resignation of coach Sakib Lovic mid-week to defeat the Central Coast 4-0 at Plum Park. George Issa scored his second double in two games, which means the Coasties have now lost four straight.

Second placed Fairfield Bulls dropped two points at struggling Sutherland, drawing 1-1. The Bulls' Matthew Borg scored after 27 minutes, making him the competition's leading scorer with 7, but Craig Hobbs scored in the second half to earn a share of the points.

The day's other game saw Chris Lansdown score his fifth of the season as Leichhardt Tigers defeated Ryde City 1-0, the first time this season Ryde have failed to score.

tion table.

Second half substitute Zoran Illic was one positive influence on the Ber-

ries, his hard work up-front set an example for others to follow.

In the 86th minute, a period of Canterbury possession, which would have included at least ten passes, opened up a gap down the left for Christoforidis to run onto a Nikas pass.

Christoforidis put the ball across the goal-mouth for a sliding Illic, who toe poked the ball home.

"It was pretty disappointing, we didn't have enough intensity and

were out-run all day," said Canterbury defender Bryan Raeburn.

"It will definitely make us hungry for the three points next week."

Certainly Canterbury will need to be hungry in their next encounter this

Friday at Henson Park when they take on Ryde City, while Eastern Suburbs will be hoping to

make it two wins from their last two matches when they meet competition front runners Macarthur, also on Friday.

APOLOGY from Paul Goodwin

Inside Soccer editor Bruce Campbell has received a full apology from Mr Paul Goodwin over remarks he recently transmitted via e-mail.

Dunroon Publishing's legal counsel viewed the remarks as defamatory and slanderous. Mr Goodwin's apology has been accepted as has his explanation concerning the sending of the document.

AISA Finals Day success

THE Australian Indoor Soccer (Five A Side) Association held its Secondary Schools State Championships at Lidcombe on Friday 19 March.

The Finals Day was the culmination of all the schools competitions that have been held throughout NSW during 1998.

These competitions started off with zone competitions through to regional titles and finally the championship day.

Winning teams were presented with

their strip, bag and polo shirt and were presented with trophies and their schools with plaques.

Male and female 15s and Open teams competed and the soccer played, as expected, was of extremely high standard.

Any student, teacher, parent or school interested in playing indoor soccer should contact the secretary AISA or the NSWSF on 9629 1800 or any local ISA centre.

Full results in RAM SCOREBOARD, pp 30/31.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND 9

Friday 2nd April

Bonnyrigg White Eagles v Leichhardt Tigers
Serbian Centre, 6:00pm
Bankstown City Lions v Blacktown City Demons
Jensen Park, 3:00pm
Fairfield Bulls v Central Coast
Nineveh Field, 3:00pm
Eastern Suburbs v Macarthur Rams
Wentworth Park, 3:00pm

Saturday 3rd April

Parramatta Eagles v Sutherland Sharks
Melita Stadium, 5:00pm



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ROUND 10

Sunday 4th April

Macarthur Rams v Canterbury Marrickville
Lynwood Park, 7:00pm
Bonnyrigg White Eagles v Ryde City
Serbian Centre, 3:00pm
Leichhardt Tigers v Bankstown City Lions
Lambert Park, 3:00pm
Blacktown City Demons v Fairfield Bulls
Gabbie Stadium, 6:00pm

Monday 5th April

Central Coast v Parramatta Eagles
Plum Park, 3:00pm
Sutherland Sharks v Eastern Suburbs
Seymour Shaw Field, 3:00pm

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION INFORMATION SERVICE 19009 22885

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It's raining goals in Canberra and Cooma

by Nick Guoth

THE GAP between the Premier League Division 1 teams and those from Division 2 was too evident last Tuesday evening when round 2 of the ACT Federation Cup commenced play.

The weather played a big part in the games at the Australian Institute of Sport grounds.

The match between Belconnen United and White Eagles had to be postponed owing to a wet pitch and will now go ahead tonight (Tuesday) night.

In the other match Gunghalin Juventus moved into contention for a place in the quarter-finals when they defeated other hopefuls Weston Creek 3-1.

At Deakin Oval Monaro maintained its lead in Pool 2 when it put six past Tuggeranong.

In a move to help promote soccer in the region, Soccer Canberra chose to play the third round match between Monaro and Cooma in Cooma, instead of Canberra.

The second match was a whitewash to Capital City Suns over Cooma 11-0.

New acquisition Pay Phommaseisy netted five goals in the thrashing and the early form of the striker is good news prior to the season start.

The second half of Round 2 was played last Thursday night.

All teams from Pools 3 and 4 were involved.

At the AIS Athletics pitch, Canberra Olympic took a stranglehold of Pool 3 when it defeated Burns Club 6-2.

Burns came out firing to start the game, but errors in defence and poor goalkeeping helped

give Olympic a 2-0 lead at the break.

Two early goals in the second half sealed the game, but Burns showed some spirit to not finish the game scoreless.

In the other match at the AIS, Australian National University defeated Belwest Foxes 3-2 in a dour struggle.

The students applied most of the pressure but lacked cohesion.

They took the lead early only to see Belwest score two themselves.

Then just on half-time ANU equalised following some good lead up work.

Both teams tried to gain the upper hand in the second half, but without success until in the dying minutes Scott Channing scored a remarkable goal when the ball bounced off both uprights.

Deakin Oval was the setting for Thursday night's Pool 4 matches, and alike Tuesday night, goals were a plenty.

University of Canberra scored a comfortable 4-0 win over O'Connor Knights, with Simon Foxhill picking up three and setting up the fourth.

All the goals came in a 20 minute period around half-time, the final only five minutes into the second period.

Uni coach Rod Lynes said: "I'm pleased with the win and it sets us up with a chance to qualify when we play Deakin on Sunday."

In the other match, Canberra Deakin trounced Queanbeyan City 8-0, thus securing a quarter-final spot.

Queanbeyan packed the defence in the first half and were able to hold out for a 0-0 scoreline, but when the first goal went in after the break, all hell broke loose.

Pool 2 saw one match

in Cooma where the home team took being hosts a little too far when they lost 12-0 to Monaro.

Riverside Oval was the setting for the second Pool 2 match between Capital City Suns and Tuggeranong United.

After a blank first half, the Suns came out firing and scored three to take the game and a spot in the quarters.

At Jamison Oval Pool 3 was fought out with the first match between ANU and the Burns Club, the most important.

ANU scored early through a defensive error but just before half-time Burns equalised following a corner that wasn't cleared.

The second half was tough with the students having the best of the chances, but neither side could penetrate and with the draw, Burns went through to the quarter-finals.

In the following match Canberra Olympic were just too good for Belwest Foxes winning 5-1.

The final pool games were held at the University of Canberra.

Second Division O'Connor Knights over-ran Queanbeyan City Lions 9-0 mainly through some good midfield play.

In the second match Canberra Deakin struggled to defeat University of Canberra, winning 2-1 with a goal in the very last minute. Uni were leading 1-0 at the break.

With all bar one game to play in the preliminary rounds, the final tables and quarter final draw, based on Belconnen winning their postponed game against White Eagles looks like:

Pool 1: Belconnen United 6, Juventus 6, Weston Creek Royals 3, White Eagles 0
 Pool 2: Mo 9, Capital City Suns 5, Cooma 3, Tuggeranong United 0
 Pool 3: Canberra Olympic 9, Burns Club 4, ANU 4, Belwest Foxes 0

Suns
 Match 2: Monaro v Gunghalin Juventus
 Match 3: Canberra Olympic v University of Canberra
 Match 4: Canberra Deakin v Burns Club
 The winners of Match 1



Ian Heywood: his Monaro side slammed a dozen past Cooma

and Match 3 will meet in one semi-final whilst the winners of Match 2 and Match 4 are to clash in the other semi-final.

And Soccer Canberra has joined forces with the Novell Canberra Cosmos to provide the possibility of a triple or even quadruple-header on Monday April 5th, Easter Monday. Anyone attending a quarterfinal double-header will obtain half-price at the Cosmos game that night at Bruce Stadium against the Sydney United Pumas, and may even get to see the National Youth League games as well.

Although nothing is set yet, the expected venues are Deakin Oval and Riverside Oval for the two double-headers with kick-off times of either 12pm and 2pm or 1pm and 3pm.



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Altona weave new found magic

by Bert van Bedaf

SOUTH Dandenong discovered just why life can be so very bleak at Paisley Park on a wet and cold autumn night when Altona weaved their new-

**ALTONA MAGIC 5
SOUTH DANDENONG 1**
Venue: Paisley Park

return to the first division in face.

So hazardous is the ninth minute, while former Gippsland Falcons

strongman Carlo Villani

before half time.

The Magic exploded after the break.

Todorovski nearly lobbed Roche in the 49th minute but the South keeper managed to scramble back and palm

Sapazovski hit the post in the 71st, before Trifunov headed home the fourth goal in the 75th minute.

It came from another brilliant Tasevski cross, but this time from the right. Sapazovski struck Altona's fifth in the 86th minute before former Adelaide Shark Reshat Mezenof scored Souths consolation goal a minute into injury time.

The South Dandenong success story reads like a fairytale, but there's great fear this season may signal a return to harsher realities.

About 12 years ago, the Albanian-backed club played in the amateur league, but a steady climb put them through 11 divisions into Victoria's highest league last season.

But this highly competitive season may see them in decline.

"With four clubs going down, the league is very tough," vice-president Tefik Sinani said.

"The team doesn't click

as well and we will need to find out what's the problem.

"We beat Sunshine 6-1 and now we've lost two games in a row, which is very dangerous."

South Dandenong player-coach Fadil Muriqi, who looks a lot like Maradona and represented the former Yugoslavia on 32 occasions, said: "The result is too high.

"It will be tough to stay in the premier league if we make mistakes."

Zoran Trajcevski, Altona's player-coach and another former Knights champion, is confident his team can move up the chart quickly.

"In our last five matches, we've had a draw and four wins in a row," he said.

"I am happy that the goals we scored are from playing action.

"The build-up from the backline, the move to midfield and then to the strikers shows we are playing good football."

"We'll be in the top," an upbeat Trajcevski said.

IN other results Preston kept up the pressure by beating Altona East 2-1, Bentleigh Greens stole a point at Port Melbourne with a 1-1 draw, Springvale gave the Melbourne Raiders a 3-0 bath and the struggling Sunshine Georgies beat St Albans 1-0.

THE Easter round is spread over a week. On Monday, April 5, St Albans is at home to Altona, Fawkner to Westgate, Bentleigh hosts Bulleen and Altona East have a hard match against Port Melbourne.

On Saturday, April 10, South Dandenong welcomes Preston.

On Sunday, April 11, the Melbourne Raiders will be ready for Sunshine, while Green Gully play Springvale at Gully Reserve on Monday, April 12.

Knights Stump Up

by Bert van Bedaf

SOCER Australia ordered the Melbourne Knights to pay for damages to the Newcastle Breakers away dressing room when the two sides met in round 11 for a heated 2-2 draw.

Knights general manager Damien Phillips said the club had paid \$651 for damaged showerheads and cleaning up of the room after Knights players had trashed it after the match.

He said all players had been fined over the incident.

"Of course, we're upset at what occurred," he said.

"We fined all 14 players who were part of the squad over the incident.

"We did it in consultation with them.

"We found them guilty and we fined them and we now consider the case a non-issue."

Phillips said the club had waited until the outcome of the SocAus investigation before it paid the bill.

"We were always going to pay the bill. But we waited until the investigation was completed to Soccer Australia and when that was completed we acted accordingly," he said.

Newcastle chairman Bill Collins said the club had received a written apology and also considered the issue closed.

Short Shots

by Bert van Bedaf

FORMER Melbourne Knights coach Vic Horvat was in charge of St Albans, losing 1-0 to relegation-troubled Sunshine last weekend.

Vince Della Plazas scored for Sunshine in the 78th minute.

PAISLEY Park, home of Altona Magic and Altona East will undergo a major facelift.

The local council of Hobsons Bay will spend \$2.16 million upgrading the soccer facilities as part of a five-year plan to improve soccer in the region.

IN player moves, goal keeper Robert Brian has left Springvale White Eagles

to join Green Gully, who also signed Sonny Sevin from the Melbourne Knights.

Preston striker Saso Markovski has been transferred to Westgate.

FAWKNER captain Tony Schipano completed 25 years with the club this week.

Schipano began playing with the club in the U7s in 1973 and broke into the senior team in 1985, which was Fawkner's first year in the premier league.

He has captained the side for the last six years.

His father, Giuseppe, and relatives Domenic and Greg were founders of the Fawkner club.

South Dandenong's Fadil Muriqi in his playing days with Canberra Metros

found Magic last Saturday night, trouncing the Southerners 5-1 in their quest of winning a fourth Victorian championship.

With an industrial backdrop of belching plumes from a nearby oil refinery behind them and a regular, low-voltage rattle of goods trains as accompaniment, the Magic are marching menacingly toward a top spot on the ladder.

The drubbing hit South Dandenong hard.

Last week they lost 2-0 to Altona East and this week just on the opposite side of the same park they came to grief again.

Souths Craig Moodie fired the first shot of the night at Altona keeper Darren McGrath in the

lower terrain this season, with four teams relegated to reduce the league to 12 clubs next season, that each week a loss can send a club closer to the guillotine.

The drubbing hit South Dandenong hard.

Last week they lost 2-0 to Altona East and this week just on the opposite side of the same park they came to grief again.

Souths Craig Moodie fired the first shot of the night at Altona keeper Darren McGrath in the

was allowed the same latitude two minutes later.

But in the 25th minute Altona pounced.

Henry Valkovski stole the ball from tardy South defender Valiant Mucaj and blasted home past keeper Chris Roche.

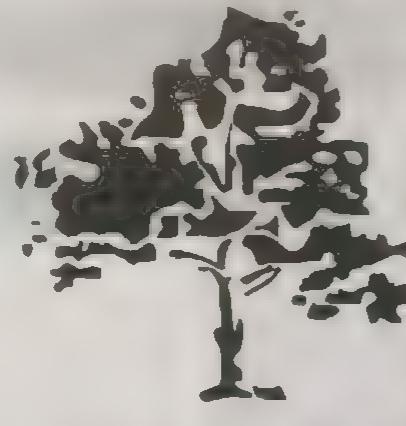
Altona could have gone further ahead, but Roche proved quicker to the ball than Zoran Todorovski in the 37th minute and Toni Trifunov shot wide after a rapid-fire one-two with Todorovski five minutes

the ball for a corner.

John Sapazovski shot wide in the 63rd minute, but Altona hit the target in the 66th.

Sapazovski took the corner. Valkovski headed the ball on and Simon Micevski hit the net at the far post.

A great run on the left flank and a perfect cross by former Melbourne Knights champion, Marjan Tasevski, put Todorovski on target for Altona's third goal after 70 minutes.



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PREMIER LEAGUE: ROUND 1

Friday 2 April

(First Grade kick off 3pm, Reserves 2.25pm, Youth 11.45am)
Woonona v Lysaghts, Ocean Park

Cringila Lions v Wollongong White Eagles, Crehan Park

Friday 2 April

(First Grade kick off 7pm, Reserves 5pm, Youth 3.30pm)
Fernhill v Bulli, Towradgi Park

Saturday 3 April

(First Grade kick off 3pm; Reserves 2.25pm, Youth 11.45am)
Kembla v Coniston Lions, Albert Bilbo Butler Memorial Park

Port Kembla v Northern United, Wetherall Park

Wollongong Olympic v Shoalhaven City, Brandon Park



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Rovers expose City's Achilles Heel

By Tony Moran

WITH the Brisbane Strikers playing at home on the Saturday, all QPL Round 6 games were played on Sunday afternoon.

Of the five games only two were in Brisbane, with the other games being played in Toowoomba, Ipswich and the Gold Coast.

The two in Brisbane, however, featured the top four on the ladder going into the round.

Down at Richlands a four o'clock kick off meant that Lions' clash with Taringa would be slightly cooler than the 2.45 match between fourth-placed Brisbane City and second-placed Rochedale Rovers.

In the end only the heat was the winner as both teams wilted in the high temperatures.

City opened the scoring

BRISBANE CITY 2 ROCHEDALE ROVERS 3

City: Appledorn, Strange, Elliot, Tuck (Voss), Geminelli (Cameron), Waugh, Battistin, Haddow, Carloss, Cooley, Jenkins (Dessi).
Rovers: Ross, Brattan, Davidson, Harris, Lane, Ditton, Fitzsimmons (Monement), Pilic, Legg, Cooper (Olley), Koch.

after thirteen minutes, however, when a poor clearance by Ross Davidson allowed new-signing Nathan Carloss to force his way through the Rovers defence.

His chip beat Graham Ross from only a few metres out, 1-0 to City.

It seemed like City were going to carry on their strong start, but on 21 minutes, Michael Legg, wide on the left cut inside his marker, Jenkins, and floated a right foot cross into the six yard box.

As the City defence raised their arms for offside midfielder, David Pilic jumped alone and headed home the equaliser.

Minutes later the move was repeated from the right, but Harris this time jumped alone only to see his header drift past the left-hand post with Appledorn beaten.

A quick one-two between Pilic and Koch opened up the City defence once more, but Pilic's left foot effort was well saved by Appledorn diving to his left.

After 36 minutes Steve Fitzsimmons picked up a loose ball on the edge of the City area and as the home defence stood and watched, his speculative shot eluded Appledorn

and ended up in the back of the net.

Nobody seemed more surprised than that Fitzsimmons and Rovers were 2-1 up.

Time and again Rovers were finding gaps in the City defence, and when Davidson and Koch broke away, the two of them only had one defender to beat between them.

Davidson rounded the keeper and pulled back for Koch who smashed it into an open goal.

Against all the odds Rovers were 3-1 up.

City coach Hamilton immediately responded by replacing Tuck with

Rovers coach Peter Bannon brought on young Matt Olley for veteran striker Kieran Cooper, who was visibly tired in the heat.

Five minutes later a cross from the right found Nathan Carloss unmarked at the far post, but his header was parried back to him by Ross.

Unfortunately he could only get to it using his hands, and received a yellow card when he slapped it into the net.

Two minutes later Monement replaced Fitzsimmons who had been injured earlier.

At 2-1 down, they missed further chances to equalise, before a late own goal sealed the points for City.

There was some consolation to be taken from an encouraging display.

They ran their more illustrious opponents close, and with a little more luck at either end, could have taken their place in the Premier League?

"Yes, we're getting there, I don't think it will be too long before we start winning," the coach said.

"We're catching up fitness wise, there's a definite improvement there."

"And we're matching teams, pushing them for maybe 30-45 minutes, so obviously we have to maintain that for the full game."

"Against Lions last week, for instance, we could have been 3-0 up within quarter of an hour."

"But we're still making little mistakes, which we often got away with in semi-pro, but they're being punished at this level, and we lost 4-1 in the end."

"We all have to mature a little, and I include myself in that."

Gary Scott's comments were to prove prophetic, Toowoomba missing a great chance to take an early lead, City opening the scoring five minutes later.

Voss, and as the half ended he stormed off to the dressing room to await his charges.

Hamilton's half-time talk must have been effective, as City came out and took the game to Rochedale.

A cross from the left was met by Carloss whose header came off the bar with Ross beaten.

Minutes later Voss broke down the left, but his cross was met by Battistin who had strayed into an offside position, and the flag went up.

On 58 minutes Mark Geminelli hobbled off and was replaced by Allan Cameron recently signed from the Queensland Academy of Sport.

And after 63 minutes Rovers coach Peter Bannon brought on young Matt Olley for veteran striker Kieran Cooper, who was visibly tired in the heat.

Five minutes later a cross from the right found Nathan Carloss unmarked at the far post, but his header was parried back to him by Ross.

Unfortunately he could only get to it using his hands, and received a yellow card when he slapped it into the net.

Two minutes later Monement replaced Fitzsimmons who had been injured earlier.

Fuelled on furex to combat the heat the Rochedale fans kept up their singing all afternoon as City launched wave after wave of attacks at the tiring City Rovers defence.

Brattan received a yellow card for a foul on the edge of the area, and from the resulting free-kick Battistin headed home, only to have his goal disallowed for pushing.

Both Battistin and captain Haddow received yellow cards for arguing with referee Richard Coutts.

With ten minutes to go Mark Dessi replaced Mark Jenkins as Hamilton made his last throw of the dice.

But Rovers went straight down the other end, and a cross from the right was put wide by

Koch when he was unmarked on the penalty spot.

Three minutes later a break by Cameron down the left saw him pull the ball back for Shane Haddow who was pulled down as he tried to control it.

Referee Coutts had no hesitation in pointing to the spot, and Mark Battistin calmly stroked it home, sending Ross the wrong way.

In the final minute Carloss was shown his second yellow, and was despatched to the dressing room.

This win for Rovers opens up a six point gap between them and City, and leaves coach Bobby Hamilton with a number of headaches only eight days away from their big clash against Lions at Richlands.

IN OTHER matches down at Richlands first half goals by Vedran Becirbegovic for Brisbane Lions and Andrew Packer for Taringa Rovers saw the honours shared as the first and third placed teams drew 1-1.

Taringa are now the only team to have taken any points off Lions, who stay top, one point ahead of Rochedale. This means that there is now a five point gap between second placed Rochedale and third-placed Taringa, with City and the Ipswich Knights a further point adrift on nine.

The Knights brought Wynnum down to earth after their win over the Gold Coast last week, beating them 4-1, with veteran Peter Vogler scoring a hat-trick. Clint Scott scored the other for Ipswich, with Nick Hadland getting the consolation for the Wolves.

Further west in Toowoomba, Andy Brayshaw got the only goal of the match as Mount Gravatt continued the Raiders miserable season, with a 1-0 win. And on the Gold Coast, the Bundaberg Waves managed to take a point forcing an own goal after Steve Mack had opened the scoring for the Coast.

getting here.

"There's a lot of talent here, plenty of good players, and we want to be part of it.

"Some of our own players are aiming at a higher level, and are capable of making it, but they won't get there playing semi-pro.

"We love it in the Premier League, we feel we have something to offer, and we intend to stay."

Scott's Toowoomba United intend to stay

by
Inside Soccer's
PAUL HARLEY

EXPLORER Robert Scott's greatest challenge was to be the first man to reach the bottom of the world.

Soccer coach Gary Scott faces almost as great a challenge, in trying to keep newcomers Toowoomba United off the bottom of the Queensland Premier League.

The league's newest club faced a daunting start to their debut season, with three of the first four games against teams who finished in last season's Top Four.

All four opening fixtures were lost, conceding 14 goals in the process.

Would he have preferred an easier start to the season?

"Certainly, a few early points would have been nice," Scott says.

"But let's face it, all the other clubs are used to playing at a higher standard than we have."

"There will be no easy games for us in the QPL League this season."

Scott came to Australia as a 14-year-old from Birmingham in England, where he had been

playing in Birmingham City's youth set-up.

He played for a time with Moorebank and Polonia in the New South Wales State League, Division 1.

His playing career ended in 1981, and the following year he moved to Toowoomba and took up the coaching position at local club Willowburn.

They were accepted into the new Semi Professional Division 1 (South), and Scott was appointed as coach, with the ultimate aim of taking the club into the flagship of Queensland soccer, the Premier League.

After dominating Semi-Pro South for two years, that became a reality in early 1999.

Beenleigh announced their withdrawal on financial grounds, and Toowoomba were invited to take their place.

This late admission left the club a little short of preparation, and Scott admitted that the team were probably not up to QPL standard at the start of the season.

"It's come as a bit of a shock, we didn't expect to get in, and only did because Beenleigh had to pull out," he says.

"It was a bit late to organise properly, but we weren't about to turn the chance down, as it might never come again.

"So it's been a bit

rushed, we're short on fitness and preparation, and playing catch up right from the start."

Prior to their away fixture at reigning premiers, Brisbane City, I asked Gary if he felt any progress had been made.

"Yes, we're getting there, I don't think it will be too long before we start winning," the coach said.

"We're catching up fitness wise, there's a definite improvement there."

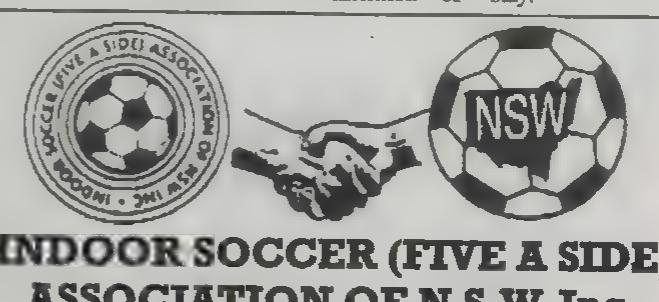
"And we're matching teams, pushing them for maybe 30-45 minutes, so obviously we have to maintain that for the full game."

"Against Lions last week, for instance, we could have been 3-0 up within quarter of an hour."

"But we're still making little mistakes, which we often got away with in semi-pro, but they're being punished at this level, and we lost 4-1 in the end."

"We all have to mature a little, and I include myself in that."

Gary Scott's comments were to prove prophetic, Toowoomba missing a great chance to take an early lead, City opening the scoring five minutes later.



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Brilliant Hendo defies champions

By Anthony Raineri

TWO outstanding second half saves by goalkeeper Paul Henderson enabled Northern Spirit to hold on for a 1-0 win over defending NSL champions South Melbourne at North Sydney Oval on Friday night.

Powerful long range blasts by South midfielder George Goutzioulis eight minutes after the break and New Zealand striker Vaughan Coveny with five minutes to go forced the rookie keeper to make acrobatic saves.

Spirit fans were in shock in the dying minutes when South had the ball in the back of the net, but the assistant referee had ruled offside a second before.

Midfielder Kresimir Marusic scored the win-

ning goal early in the game and the home team had to survive a nail-biting finish to hold off South Melbourne who looked more and more likely to score as the game wore on.

Expecting one of their toughest matches of the season, Spirit encountered an insipid South Melbourne in the first half.

The goal came after 11 minutes when South Melbourne keeper Michael Petkovic dropped a speculative 25m shot by midfielder Paul Biloškapić.

Marusic, a former player of the year, pounced on the loose ball to poke in his eighth goal of the season.

Spirit dominated the rest of the half without being overly stretched

and had perhaps the second and third best chances to score another goal but English import Ian Crook and Young Socceroo reject Matthew Langdon missed the target.

South did not have a single shot on goal in the first half except for a Fausto De Amicis strike, which although powerful, was inaccurate.

Spirit kicked off the second half in much the same fashion with Clayton Zane chipping the crossbar.

South, with coach Angie Postecoglou's half-time tirade still fresh in the players' mind, decided to make a game of it and had Spirit under siege for the rest of the game.

Spirit player-coach Graham Arnold was un-

able to complete his 200th NSL game after suffering a minor neck injury in the 60th minute.

Postecoglou, after his team's fourth loss of the season, said he was happy with his side's overall performance.

"We got what we expected in the first 15 minutes and unfortunately conceded a goal," he said. "If we keep playing like this we won't have many problems."

"I have learnt over the years that in the lead up to the finals how you are playing is just as important as the results."

Spirit coach Graham Arnold said he was elated with the turnaround in form after last week's shock 2-1 loss to wooden spooner Canberra Cosmos.

"South Melbourne is the best team to have played here this season," he said.

"At least they play football and never just put players behind the

ball."

Arnold also heaped praise on his counterpart.

"Everyone is mentioning other names for the Socceroos coaching position but I think Angie

also deserves to be considered."

Of his own players Arnold paid special tribute to Matthew Langdon.

"He's been feeling a bit down because he missed

out on the young Socceroos squad," Arnold said. "But I have told him the only way to prove (coach) Les Scheinflug wrong is to keep playing well."

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1 (Marusic)
SOUTH MELBOURNE 0
Venue: North Sydney Oval
Man of the Match: Paul Henderson SPRT



Kresimir Marusic: got his eighth goal of the season

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Singing Knipe enough

A DOUBLE from multi talented midfielder Wayne Knipe kept Brisbane Strikers faint Ericsson Cup hopes alive with a convincing 3-1 win over Canberra Cosmos at Suncorp Stadium on Saturday.

The win puts the former Ericsson Cup champions three points outside the top six in seventh place with four games remaining.

Brisbane, who need to overhaul either Adelaide City or Sydney Olympic to make the playoffs led 1-0 at the break after a dominating first half.

The Strikers had eight definite scoring chances before Knipe broke the deadlock in the 26th minute.

Knipe, playing his first game since dropped by coach John Kosmina following the Newcastle clash in mid-January, grabbed with two

hands his opportunity to impress again.

He had earlier surprised the small crowd of 3,454 by singing the national anthem prior to kick off, registered his first goal of the season scoring from close range past Canberra keeper Vilson Knezevic.

Knipe, who came into the side for Sean Cranney, bagged his second goal in the 89th minute again from close range off a cross from Nick Meredith.

Although the crowd was smaller than expected, it was enough to give the Strikers the honour of registering the Ericsson Cup's one millionth spectator for the season.

The Strikers served notice from the opening whistle that they had not given up their slim finals hopes with several close calls in the first 20 minutes.

Canberra keeper Knezevic was called on in the first minute to tip a 20 metre shot from Strikers front man Stu McLaren wide of the upright.

Reece Tollenaere missed with a sitter scooping a shot over the crossbar in the 13th minute while team mates Kasey Wehrman and Jeremy Harris both were astray with gift chances.

Only desperate defence from the visitors prevented a Strikers whitewash in the first half.

The Strikers continued their dominance after the break but had to wait until the 72nd minute before extending their lead 2-0 when Meredith rifled a 20 metre angled shot which took a slight deflection off a Canberra defender into the net.

The only joy for Canberra came deep into time-on when midfielder Ivo De Jesus surged into the box in a solo run before beating keeper Clint Bolton with his shot.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 3 (Knipe 2, Meredith)
CANBERRA COSMOS 1 (De Jesus)
Venue: Suncorp Stadium
Man of the Match: Nick Meredith. BRIS



Nick Meredith: his goal helped keep Brisbane's faint hopes alive

Cold Knights all but end Breakers hopes

MELBOURNE Knights ended Newcastle's undefeated streak of nine matches when a first half goal by Zeljko Susa beat the Breakers 1-0 at a wet and windy Knights Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

The loss made it harder for Newcastle to make the national soccer league finals while the Knights hope to move further away from the table bottom in the closing rounds.

The Knights, without suspended captain Ante Kovacevic, took the lead after 24 minutes when midfielder Susa's shot took a deflection off Breakers defender Adam Sanderson and flew past keeper Bob Catlin into the net.

Newcastle had a chance to get even in the 27th minute, but Tom Haythornthwaite's header from a Robert Shannon corner went over the bar.

The Breakers were nearly a

goal down after 14 minutes but Mark Wilson headed the ball off the line after Knights defensive midfielder Joe Rajher headed goalwards from a corner.

Newcastle pressured after the break and Glenn Sprod in the 48th minute hit a wind-assisted corner that curled goal-bound and was palmed onto the bar by Knights keeper Martin John.

A minute later Haythornthwaite headed into John from close range to waste another opportunity.

Ivan Kelic should have put the Knights further ahead in the 70th minute but his shot hit the far post with only Catlin to beat after a clever through pass by Ante Deak.

Tasmanian Lance Plunkett, who played in the Maldives, made his debut for the Knights after a long

wait, coming on as a substitute for Ransford Banini in the 87th minute.

"We'll try to lift at least another spot for the rest of the season to finish the job on a high note," Knights coach Joe Biskic said.

"We have two more games at home which we must win and hopefully we'll take some away points. Somehow we can't win two games in a row, which is really important for us."

Biskic said Rajher, Michael Reda and Susa had been his best players in the windy conditions which made play notoriously difficult at the Sunshine ground. Newcastle coach Lee Sterrey said his team had been woeful in the first half when playing into the strong wind.

"We did not handle the conditions at all," Sterrey said. "We have to win our last four games for a chance at the finals but we're still in it."

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1 (Susa)
NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0
Venue: Knights Park
Man of the Match: Michael Reda MELK

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE



Round 27: 3/5 April

Saturday 3 April

Marconi v Melbourne Knights

Marconi Stadium

7.30pm

Sunday 4 April

Newcastle Breakers v Wollongong Wolves

Breakers Stadium 6.00pm

South Melbourne v Brisbane Strikers

Bob Jane Stadium 6.00pm

Gippsland Falcons v Northern Spirit

Mobil Park 6.00pm

Adelaide Sharks v Adelaide City

Hindmarsh Stadium 4.30pm

Sydney Olympic v Carlton

Belmore Sports Ground 6.30pm

Monday 5 April

Canberra Cosmos v Sydney United

Bruce Stadium 7.30pm

Bye: Perth Glory

NOTE: all information believed correct at time of going to press. Please check with daily press, your club or Soccer Australia for changes to scheduled kick offs.
ASF (02) 9380 6099, Adelaide City (08) 8336 9077, Adelaide Sharks (08) 8351 9866, Brisbane Strikers (07) 3252 5327, Carlton (03) 9389 6213, Canberra Cosmos (02) 6281 7981, Gippsland Falcons (03) 5134 5529, Marconi Fairfield (02) 9823 2222, Melbourne Knights (03) 9699 4188, Newcastle Breakers (02) 4951 2722, Northern Spirit (02) 9460 2187, Perth Glory (08) 9383 9911, South Melbourne (03) 9645 9797, Sydney Olympic (02) 9558 5355, Sydney United (02) 9823 6418, Wollongong City (02) 4226 3988

Stallions are still alive

by Alan Clark

THIS WAS a match where the prize for the winner was a meagre one, but failure to win it would be deadly.

Carlton and Marconi - for most of the season each a hot tip for a long run in the Finals - had sunk to positions on the ladder from where it was more likely their seasons would cease on Anzac Day.

A sustained run of victories would rehabilitate their chances, but cruel fate meant that their head-to-head meeting in this game must lead to the extinguishment of hope for one.

At the whistle it was Marconi players who were jubilant, and

Carlton heads downcast as Marconi had managed to come from behind to win 2-1.

Since Christmas, when things had seemed bright for then fourth-placed Marconi, the pedigree Sydney side had garnered only 12 of the 42 points on offer.

Carlton - then third - had managed but eleven of their 39.

Both sides then were only one win from league leadership.

If the NSL ladder comprised only the games since Christmas, Marconi and Carlton would languish in 11th and 12th places respectively, and have the league's leakiest and second leakiest defences.

Both teams' aspirations

were for something significantly better.

Now needing to make up a two-win gap for sixth place, Marconi's plight was desperate.

Carlton, chasing a gap exceeding two wins, were surely on their last chance.

But for such a game where there was plenty at stake, the first half was mostly a turgid and uninspiring exhibition, with little desire or passion evident on the park.

Maybe there was too much at stake.

Carlton were, once again, compelled to blood young players, as established ones were absent through injury and national youth team obligations.

Steve Martin was one

newcomer who impressed - in the 20th minute he brought down a diagonal ball supplied by Marcus Stergiopoulos from his chest and managed a shot from the corner of the penalty area which whistled over.

Two minutes later Martin was again just off-target when a pass from Carlton captain Andrew Marth managed to find the youngster after Buddy Farah missed an opportunity to intercede.

Newcomer Archie Thompson had an opportunity from an Alex Moreira pass, but Thompson's shot was smothered by Ante Covic.

Just before the half ended, Thompson provided what turned out to be a cameo of the influence he would exert in the second half.

He made a swerving run past four defenders, leaving two on the ground in his wake, be-

fore loosing a shot which was caught by Covic.

Marconi too had opportunities - skipper Brad Maloney had started well and exerted his influence throughout.

He had been flattened by Carlton keeper Dean Anastasiadis in a tackle, which if performed by an outfielder would have warranted a penalty and an early finish for the tackler, and which required him to spend some minutes off the park under treatment.

Just before the end of the half, Kris Trajanovski was just centimetres from converting a ball on the slide, played in by Francis Awaritefe.

Nine minutes into the second half - with the game temperature rising for a period - Thompson was released and broke strongly for goal.

After making considerable ground and being in a threatening position but wider than he preferred,

he elected to attempt to turn with the ball and open the width of his target.

By doing so, he allowed the Marconi defence to catch up and bustle him out of possession.

It was building, but few expected the avalanche of incident arising in a quarter-hour period starting with the game's opening goal from Thompson in the 72nd minute.

Thompson had exchanged a pass with Moreira mid-pitch and ran with the Brazilian as he homed-in on goal.

At the edge of the penalty-area Dominic Longo and Mike Smith made ineffectual tackles allowing Moreira to shoot.

Covic palmed the ball only to Thompson who gleefully netted.

Two minutes after, David Cervinski was to rue a foul that put Maloney over the free-kick midway into attacking territory.

Maloney played a square ball to Chad Gibson who had moved up un-noticed and so unmarked.

Gibson's shot from fully 30 metres screamed past Anastasiadis for the equaliser.

Maloney and Smith nearly combined just moments later for another, and Gibson's long

range shot from a wide position was gratefully touched over by Anastasiadis.

Both sides now launched their final efforts to keep their seasons alive. Thompson had a shot ten minutes from time which Covic deflected over, and a Marth header to Cervinski was cut back to Moreira who was wide from close-in.

But it was Maloney's free-kick from 25 metres, taking a slight deflection off the defensive wall and flying past Anastasiadis that proved to be the winner.

When asked if the loss effectively ends Carlton's season, a dejected coach Eddie Krcevic said: "Absolutely."

"It's very disappointing for everyone concerned."

"I thought we could have got a result today."

It was a different story in the visitors' rooms - the players' singing of "We are alive!" could be heard through the change-room walls.

Coach Frank Farina - happy at the come-from-behind win said: "I thought the boys fought back well."

"I was reasonably happy with the way we played tonight."

"It was always going to be a game decided by one goal."

"We're still alive."

CARLTON 1 (Thompson)
MARCONI 2 (Gibson, Maloney)
Venue: Olympic Park
Man of the Match: Brad Maloney MARC

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FITNESS FOR FOOTBALL

(1st Tuesday of the month)

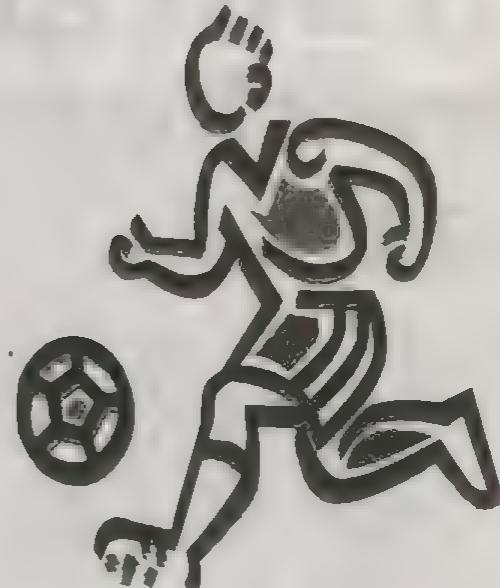
FOOTBALL ROCKS THE NET

(3rd Tuesday of the month)

BOOTS'N'BALLS

(last Tuesday of the month)

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Danny Boy stars in Wolves home win

by Mike Driscoll

ROOKIE goalkeeper Daniel Beltrame was the hero for Wollongong Wolves in its 2-0 victory over national soccer league struggler Adelaide Sharks at Brandon Park on Sunday.

Wolves skipper Matt Horsley scored on 13 minutes with the victory only sealed three minutes into injury time through new signing Tahitian international Gerald Quennet.

Despite both teams being out of play-off contention, it was an entertaining game of many chances. Horsley finished off a neat passing move on the edge of the Sharks box to give Wollongong an early lead.

The midfielder slipped

but still managed to squeeze the ball past Adelaide keeper Nathan Wildy.

In a busy game for both keepers Beltrame, in only his second senior game made three telling saves.

Twice he denied Sharks striker Alex Duric with one on one saves.

Beltrame's other important save was a long range effort from Sharks defender Alex Castro in the 20th minute. Joel Porter should have earned the visitors a goal but spooned his shot over the bar in the final minutes.

Wollongong then ensured maximum points and their eighth win of the season when substitute Quennet broke clear to score his first goal for Wollongong three minutes into injury time.

Both teams had plenty of chances with Wollongong in particular on top in the first half.

Wollongong almost went 2-0 ahead on 38 minutes when striker Ray Younis had a header cleared off the line and from the rebound Michael Brooks had a goal-bound shot scrambled clear.

But the Sharks were always dangerous on the counter attack with Duric a constant threat up front.

It has been a tough week for Adelaide on and off the field, with the cash strapped club appointing an administrator last Thursday.

Meanwhile, Wollongong have now made it two wins in a row and are



Skipper Matt Horsley: on the scoresheet again as the Wolves make it two in a row

looking to finish the season strongly. On Sunday skipper Horsley was again inspirational in midfield, as was Paul Reid while Fijian interna-

tional Esala Masi did well up front.

For a spirited Sharks

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2 (Horsley, Quennet)
ADELAIDE SHARKS 0
Venue: Brandon Park
Man of the Match: Daniel Beltrame WOLL

Last gasp Halpin rescues Glory

By Andrew Hamilton

SYDNEY Olympic ended Perth Glory's best ever winning streak and robbed them of a spot on top of the national soccer league ladder when they fought out a thrilling 2-2 draw at Perth Oval on Sunday.

Olympic appeared to have the game won until the 93rd minute when a free kick by Scott Halpin sailed past a six man wall and into the back of the net. Olympic appeared to expect the kick to come from the deadly boot of Con Boutsianis and were left flat footed when Halpin took the shot.

It was a game both sides were destined to win and one in which both had plenty of opportunities to secure the three points.

The home side came out firing and had found the back of the net within three minutes of the kick off through the boot of Bobby Despotovski, but the star striker was deemed offside and the score

did not register. Glory dominated proceedings in the first half but wasted many opportunities. The best chance was a penalty to Alistair Edwards, but Olympic keeper George Bouhoustos was equal to the task. Perth did not score until the 31st minute when Boutsianis put a shot past the outstretched arms of Bouhoustos.

The leveller came in the 65th minute when diving Sydney skipper Peter Tsekenis connected with a corner kick that had cleared a pack of players and headed it into the corner of the net.

With the scores tied, both sides looked for something from their bench players and it was the Sydney duo of Mark Brennan and Nick Carle who were the first to produce the goods.

In the 84th minute Carle headed a clever chip kick from Brennan to score. All seemed lost for Perth until Halpin's flash of brilliance in the dying stages.



Peter Tsekenis: scored with a diving header

PERTH GLORY 2 (Boutsianis, Halpin)
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2 (Tsekenis, Brennan)
Venue: Perth Oval
Man of the Match: Peter Tsekenis SOLY

SCOREBOARD

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RAM SPORTS

INTERNATIONAL

FRIENDLY CHALLENGE

23 March	Australia Under 20s 1
RKC Waalwijk 1	Colosimo 89
Australia: A Breaden, E Bosnar (M Byrnes 68'), S Colosimo, M Cunico, B Emerton (C Care 80'), L Wilson, J Culina, V Grella, M Bresciano (D Temmello 58'), J Maisano, M Sterjovski (D Invincible 58')	
Vitesse Arnhem 0	Australia Under 20s 2
	Colosimo 27, 62
Australia: A Breaden, L Wilson, S Colosimo, E Bosnar, M Cunico, B Emerton, V Grella, J Culina, M Bresciano, D Invincible, J Maisano	
Feyenoord 0	Australian Under 20s 3
	Sterjovski 4
	Bosnar 18
	Cunico 80
Australia: M Turnbull, L Wilson (P Wearne 45'), M Cunico, E Bosnar, M Byrnes, D Invincible, V Grella (M Bresciano 67'), C Care, D Temmello, J Maisano (J Culina 67'), M Sterjovski (B Emerton 75')	

SCHOOLS

Australian Indoor Soccer Association

NSW Schools State Championship	
Friday 19 March	
Under 15 Girls	
NSW White 4	Northern NSW 2
Under 15 Boys	
Northern NSW 6	NSW White 2
Open Girls	
NSW Blue 3	Northern NSW 0
Open Boys	
NSW Blue 2	Southern NSW 1

NEW SOUTH WALES

SUPER LEAGUE: 1st GRADE

Blacktown City 4	Bonnyrigg 2
J Bennett 64	P Dee 49
D Smith 66	C Luff 90
C Bradley 70/79	
Bankstown City 4	Central Coast 0
G Issa 8/82	
M Lozevski 44m	
S Van Bentum 61m	
Sutherland Sharks 1	Fairfield Bulls 1
C Hobbs 63	M Borg 72
Macarthur Rams 1	Parramatta Eagles 0
I McDonald 82	
Eastern Suburbs 3	Canterbury 1
V Mikoutski 36	Z Ilic 85
N Imaya 41/47	
Leichhardt Tigers 1	Ryde City 0
C Lansdowne 25	
UNDER 21:	
Bonnyrigg 3	Blacktown City 2
Central Coast 2	Bankstown City 1
Fairfield Bulls 3	Sutherland Sharks 1
Parramatta Eagles 2	Macarthur Rams 1
Eastern Suburbs 3	Canterbury Marrickville 0
Leichhardt Tigers 3	Ryde City 1
UNDER 18:	
Blacktown City 5	Bonnyrigg 0
Bankstown City 2	Central Coast 1
Sutherland Sharks 1	Fairfield Bulls 1
Parramatta Eagles 7	Macarthur Rams 0
Eastern Suburbs 0	Canterbury Marrickville 0
Leichhardt Tigers 1	Ryde City 0

NSW Super League

FIRST GRADE	
Macarthur Rams	P W D L F A Pt
8 6 1 1 17 9 19	
Fairfield Bulls	8 5 2 1 16 11 17
Blacktown City Demons	8 5 1 2 16 8 16
Bankstown City Lions	8 5 0 3 21 13 15
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8 4 1 3 19 16 13
Leichhardt Tigers	8 4 1 3 13 10 13
Canterbury Marrickville	8 3 2 3 15 12 11

ERICSSON CUP 1998/99

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 South Melbourne	24	14	6	4	44	24	48
2 Sydney United	24	15	3	6	45	31	48
3 Perth Glory	24	14	4	6	53	30	46
4 Northern Spirit	24	11	2	9	32	31	41
5 Adelaide City	24	11	6	7	37	24	39
6 Sydney Olympic	24	11	6	7	40	29	39
7 Marconi Fairfield	24	11	3	10	44	45	36
8 Brisbane Strikers	24	10	5	9	36	39	35
9 Newcastle Breakers	24	9	6	9	23	29	33
10 Carlton	25	9	4	12	43	40	32
11 Wollongong City	24	8	6	10	37	39	30
12 Adelaide Sharks	24	6	6	12	32	39	24
13 Melbourne Knights	24	6	5	13	27	36	23
14 Gippsland Falcons	24	5	6	13	14	41	21
15 Canberra Cosmos	25	4	2	19	20	50	14

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Northern Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
AIS	25	18	6	1	87	15	60
Sydney Olympic	24	18	2	4	80	24	56
Marconi Fairfield	23	15	5	3	70	16	50
Newcastle Breakers	24	15	5	4	55	25	50
Northern Spirit	24	16	2	6	51	21	50
NSWIS	24	15	3	6	62	25	48
Wollongong Wolves	24	15	2	7	74	27	47
QAS	23	13	1	9	64	38	40
Sydney United	24	8	4	12	42	42	28
Marconi Fairfield Colts	23	6	4	13	25	42	22
ACTAS	24	4	3	17	30	69	15
Northern Spirit Colts	24	4	3	17	22	90	15
Sydney United Colts	24	4	1	19	26	77	13
Sydney Olympic Academy	24	3	4	17	21	92	13
Wollongong Wolves Colts	24	1	3	20	15	122	6

Southern Division	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Carlton	20	14	3	3	58	24	45
South Melbourne	20	11	3	6	33	20	36
Melbourne Knights	21	9	3	9	44	42	30
VIS	17	8	5	4	33	27	29
Gippsland Falcons	19	7	3	9	32	31	24
Bulleen Inter Kings	18	7	2	9	25	33	23
Albury Wodonga	19	1	1	17	18	66	4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Parramatta Eagles	8	3	1	4	10	9	10
Central Coast	8	2	1	5	8	18	7
Ryde City	8	1	3	4	10	14	6
Sutherland Sharks	8	1	2	5	9	20	5
Eastern Suburbs	8	1	1	6	9	23	4
UNDER 21	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Parramatta Eagles	8	5	2	1	19	11	17
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8	5	0	3	13	7	15
Central Coast	8	4	2	2	13	13	14
Macarthur Rams	8	4	1	3	16	12	13
Canterbury Marrickville	8	4	1	3	13	9	13
Fairfield Bulls	8	4	1	3	11	13	13
Eastern Suburbs	8	4	0	4	11	11	12
Ryde City	8	3	1	4	17	14	10
Blacktown City Demons	8	3	1	4	16	15	10
Sutherland Sharks	8	3	1	4	6	13	6
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	8	1	2	5	5	16	5
Fairfield Bulls	8	1	2	5	7	22	5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt

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SCOREBOARD

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RAM SPORTS

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE:

GRADE 13:	
Leichhardt Tigers 5	Macarthur Rams 0
Sydney United 1	Gladesville Hornsby 1
Parramatta Eagles 1	Wollongong Wolves 1
Southern Districts 1	Eastern Suburbs 1
Newcastle Breakers 1	Marconi Fairfield 0
Sutherland Sharks 1	Central Coast 0
Southern Branch 4	Manly Warringah 3
Blacktown City 5	Sydney Olympic 1
GRADE 14:	
Leichhardt Tigers 3	Macarthur Rams 1
Gladesville Hornsby 3	Sydney United 2
Wollongong Wolves 4	Parramatta Eagles 1
Southern Districts 2	Eastern Suburbs 1
Marconi Fairfield 3	Newcastle Breakers 1
Sutherland Sharks 2	Central Coast 1
Southern Branch 2	Manly Warringah 1
Blacktown City 2	Sydney Olympic 0
GRADE 15:	
Macarthur Rams 1	Leichhardt Tigers 1
Sydney United 1	Gladesville Hornsby 1
Parramatta Eagles 1	Wollongong Wolves 1
Southern Districts 3	Eastern Suburbs 0
Marconi Fairfield 5	Newcastle Breakers 0
Central Coast 1	Sutherland Sharks 1
Manly Warringah 3	Southern Branch 1
Blacktown City 3	Sydney Olympic 1
GRADE 16:	
Leichhardt Tigers 3	Macarthur Rams 0
Sydney United 3	Gladesville Hornsby 2
Parramatta Eagles 2	Wollongong Wolves 0
Southern Districts 5	Eastern Suburbs 2
Marconi Fairfield 1	Marconi Fairfield 1
Sutherland Sharks 4	Central Coast 1
Manly Warringah 4	Manly Warringah 1
Sydney Olympic 3	Blacktown City 0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE:	
GRADE 13:	
Ryde City 4	Canterbury 1
Illawarra Lions 3	Bankstown Assoc 2
AC United 3	Stanmore Hawks 1
Blacktown Association 3	Penrith Panthers 1
Rockdale City Suns 1	Bonnyrigg 0
St George 2	Hills United 0
Canterbury Association 8	Fairfield Bulls 2
GRADE 14:	
Ryde City 8	Canterbury 0
Bankstown Association 2	Illawarra Lions 2
AC United 3	Stanmore Hawks 0
Penrith Panthers 1	Blacktown Assoc 1
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1	Rockdale City Suns 0
St George 2	Hills United 0
Canterbury Association 2	Fairfield Bulls 0
GRADE 15:	
Ryde City 5	Canterbury 0
Illawarra Lions 3	Bankstown Assoc 1
AC United 2	Stanmore Hawks 0
Penrith Panthers 1	Blacktown Assoc 1
Bonnyrigg 2	Rockdale City Suns 0
Hills United 3	St George 0
Fairfield Bulls 3	Canterbury Assoc 2
GRADE 16:	
Ryde City 5	Canterbury 1
Bankstown Assoc 2	Illawarra Lions 1
AC United 6	Stanmore Hawks 2
Blacktown Association 1	Penrith Panthers 0
Rockdale City Suns 2	Bonnyrigg 2
Hills United 1	St George 1
Fairfield Bulls 1	Canterbury Assoc 0

DIVISION TWO:

GRADE 13:

Nepean Association 3	Granville Association 0
Macquarie Sports 4	Parramatta City 0
Mt Pritchard 3	CSI Schofields 0
Camden Tigers 1	Ku-Ring-Gai Assoc 1
Hawkesbury City 3	Hajduk Wanderers 3
Mt Druitt Town 7	Moorebank Sports 1

GRADE 14:

Granville Association 2	Nepean Association 1
Macquarie Sports 2	Parramatta City 1
Mt Pritchard 1	CSI Schofields 1
Ku-Ring-Gai 2	Camden 1
Hajduk 3	Hawkesbury 1
Mt Druitt 4	Moorebank 0

GRADE 15:

Nepean 4	Granville 1
Parramatta 2	Macquarie 0

GRADE 13:

Mt Pritchard 5	CSI Schofields 1
Camden 1	Ku-Ring-Gai 0
Hajduk 3	Hawkesbury 0
Moorebank 0	Mt Druitt 0

GRADE 16:

Nepean 3	Granville 1
Macquarie 5	Parramatta 3
Mt Pritchard 5	CSI Schofields 1
Camden 3	Ku-Ring-Gai 1
Hajduk 2	Hawkesbury 0
Mt Druitt 7	Moorebank 1

CADET LEAGUE: DIVISION ONE

GRADE 11:	
Bonnyrigg White Eagles 4	Parramatta City 3
St George 2	Marconi Fairfield 1
Macarthur Rams 3	Parramatta Eagles 1
Canterbury Marrickville 5	Eastern Suburbs 0
Leichhardt Tigers 2	Ryde City 0

GRADE 12:

St George 1	Marconi Fairfield 0
Parramatta Eagles 5	Macarthur Rams 2
Eastern Suburbs 5	Canterbury Marrickville
0	
Leichhardt Tigers 4	Ryde City 1

DIV TWO: GRADE 11

Stanmore 2	Hajduk 2
Hawkesbury 2	Moorebank 1
Penrith 7	Mt Druitt 0
AC Utd 8	Hurstville 1
Hills Utd 2	Mt Pritchard 1
Illawarra 5	Macquarie 3

GRADE 12:

Stanmore 1	Hajduk 0
Hawkesbury 0	Moorebank 0
Penrith 3	Mt Druitt 1
AC Utd 5	Hurstville 0
Hills Utd 4	Mt Pritchard 2
Macquarie 1	Illawarra 0

VICTORIA

VICTORIAN PROVISIONAL LEAGUE CUP

27 March	
First Grade	
Newborough 1	Morwell Pegasus 1*
Templestowe 2	Keilor United 3
Heatherton United 6	North Sunshine 1
Brandon Park 5	Meadow Park 1
Northern United 1	North Glenroy 3
Hoppers Crossing 1	Endeavour United 3
Somerton City 3	Monbulk 1
Whittlesea United 1	Uni of Melbourne 2
Keon Park 2	Dandenong 1
Waverley 2	Mill Park 1
Brimbank City 1	North Reservoir 3
Thornbury United 1	Newport United 2
Brunswick City 5	Noble Park 0
Dandenong Inter 3	Darebin United 2
Latrobe University 3	West Preston 1
Second Grade	
Newborough 2	Morwell Pegasus 1
Templestowe 1	Keilor United 2
Heatherton United 0	North Sunshine 2
Brandon Park 1	Meadow Park 0
Northern United 2	North Glenroy 1
Hoppers Crossing 1	Endeavour United 2
Somerton City 1	Monbulk 4
Whittlesea United 1	Uni of Melbourne 4
Keon Park 0	Dandenong 5
Waverley 2	Mill Park 1
Brimbank City 1	North Reservoir 1*
Thornbury United 1	Newport United 0
Brunswick City 3	Noble Park 1
Dandenong Inter 0	Darebin United 7
Latrobe University 1	West Preston 2

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE: Firsts

March 22: Round 8	
Altona Magic 5	South Dandenong 1
Micevski	Mesenof
Todorovski	
Sapalovski	
Velkovski	
Trifumov	

March 27/28: Round 9

Altona Magic 5	
Micevski	
Todorovski	
Sapalovski	
Velkovski	
Trifumov	

FEEL THE POWER

Novell Canberra Cosmos

v Pass
SYDNEY UNITED

Bruce Stadium
Monday 5 April
KICK OFF 7.30pm

NOTE: changed kick off
details from previous
Inside Soccer